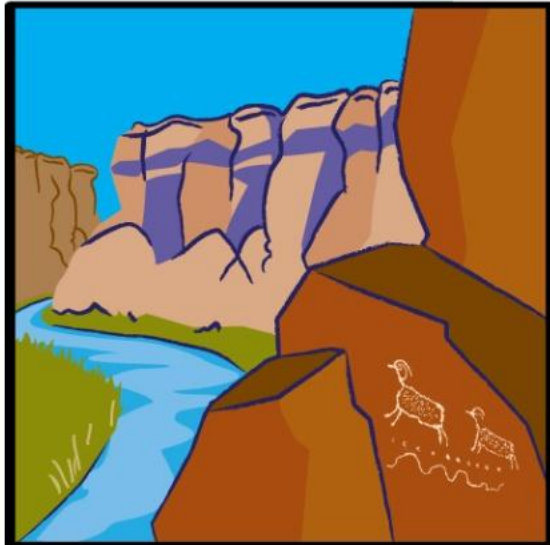


**US Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Dominguez-Escalante National Conservation Area
and Dominguez Canyon Wilderness**

Resource Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement



**SCOPING SUMMARY REPORT
February 2011**

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SUMMARY

On March 30, 2009, the Dominguez-Escalante National Conservation Area (D-E NCA) and the Dominguez Canyon Wilderness (Wilderness), was created by Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009 (Public Law 111-11, “the Act” or “Omnibus Act” hereafter).

The D-E NCA and wilderness planning area is located in Mesa, Delta, and Montrose Counties, Colorado and encompasses approximately 209,610 acres of public land.

The United States Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is preparing a Resource Management Plan (RMP) for the Dominguez-Escalante National Conservation Area and Dominguez Canyon Wilderness, in western Colorado. This RMP is a joint effort of the Grand Junction and Uncompahgre Field Offices. The environmental effects of the RMP will be evaluated in an environmental impact statement (EIS), which will accompany the draft and final RMP documents.

The RMP will replace portions of the existing 1987 Grand Junction Resource Area RMP and the 1989 Uncompahgre Basin RMP. This new planning process will allow the BLM to focus specifically on developing management to conserve, protect and enhance the resources and values of the NCA and the wilderness area as set forth in Section 2402(b) of the Omnibus Act.

Public involvement is a key element of an effective RMP/EIS process. Even further, the Omnibus Act creating D-E NCA mandates public scoping and outreach during the planning process; and formation of an Advisory Council.

Mesa State College’s Natural Resources and Land Policy Institute has been an essential partner in this endeavor. The Institute conducted surveys of recreationists in the NCA and held focus group meetings regarding recreation and wilderness management.

This report documents the results of the public and agency scoping and outreach process. The purpose of the scoping process is to determine relevant issues that will influence the scope of the environmental analysis, including alternatives, and guide the planning process.

PUBLIC SCOPING ACTIVITIES

The formal public scoping process for the D-E NCA RMP/EIS began on August 3, 2010 with the publication of a notice of intent in the *Federal Register*, and ended on October 1, 2010. Public outreach during this scoping period included two open houses, a news release and an information flier posted in Grand Junction and Delta outdoor recreation-oriented shops and centers, as well as information kiosks in the D-E NCA itself. Notices of the scoping meetings were emailed to individuals who had expressed

interest. Information was also publicly available on the BLM's D-E NCA website (<http://www.blm.gov/co/st/en/nca/denca.html>).

PUBLIC SCOPING RESULTS

The BLM received 66 unique emails, letters and comment during the public scoping period. Over 2,000 identical form letters were received, which were treated as one letter.

Individual comments were identified within each submission, and initially categorized according to their relevance to the D-E NCA RMP. Comments that addressed a 'planning issue' were then further categorized, coded, entered into a database, and analyzed. Additional comments of relevance to the D-E NCA RMP that were received during the Grand Junction Field Office and Uncompahgre Field Office scoping processes were added, categorized, coded, entered into a database, and analyzed as well.

In total, 264 'planning issue' comments were identified and further analyzed. Of the 264 comments, 95 came from unaffiliated individuals, 14 came from public agencies, 13 came from businesses, nine form letter comments and the balance (133) came from non-profit or citizen's groups. No written submissions were received from tribal governments or elected officials. Non-substantive comments were not included.

TOPICS SUMMARY

Based on public scoping, the following topics are of most interest to commentors and are presented in descending order of the number of comments received:

- Travel Management
- Recreation
- Wild and Scenic Rivers
- Wilderness
- General Planning
- Cultural Resources
- Fish and Wildlife
- Law Enforcement
- Vegetation Management
- Air, Climate and Noise
- Special Designation Areas
- Water and Soil
- Livestock Grazing
- Paleontology and Geology
- Energy Development
- Visual Resource Management
- Socio-Economics

The BLM further analyzed individual comments to identify any new planning issues to help guide the development of a reasonable range of alternative management strategies for the RMP, in addition to planning issues.

FUTURE STEPS

Scoping is the first opportunity for public involvement in the RMP process. The D-E NCA will use information collected during the scoping period to formulate alternatives and prepare the Draft RMP/EIS, which is anticipated to be published in the summer of 2012.

Release of the Draft RMP/EIS will be announced in a Notice of Availability in the Federal Register and in the local media. There will be additional public meetings to solicit public comment on the draft document. At the conclusion of the public comment period, the Draft RMP/EIS will be revised, and a Proposed RMP/EIS will be published and made available for public review. (See Planning Flowchart below.)

While these are the specific opportunities for public involvement during RMP process, the BLM welcomes input from the public on the RMP process at any time. You can follow the RMP/EIS process and get news updates from our Web site at http://www.blm.gov/co/st/en/nca/denca/denca_rmp.html

You can also sign up to receive a newsletter (electronically or hard copy) by emailing the D-E NCA staff at dencarmp@blm.gov or faxing us 970-244-3083 or writing us at 2815 H Road, Grand Junction, Colorado 82506.

For more information and/or to have your name added to our mailing list, contact Ben Blom, D-E NCA planning team lead, telephone (970) 244-3188; or by e-mail: Benjamin.Blom@blm.gov.

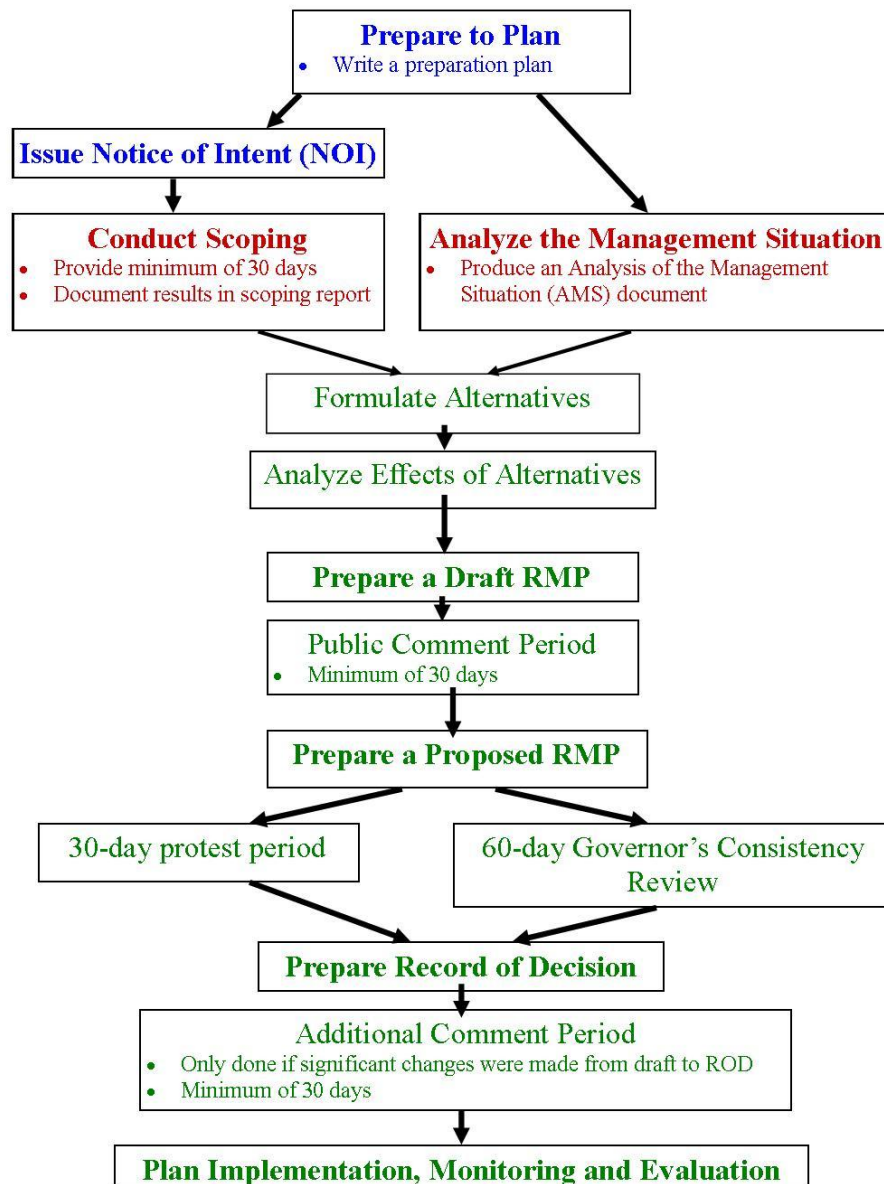


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ACRONYMS

Acronym

Definition

ACEC	Area of Critical Environmental Concern
ATV	all-terrain vehicle
BLM	Bureau of Land Management
BMP	Best Management Practices
CDOW	Colorado Division of Wildlife
CEQ	Council on Environmental Quality
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
CNAP	Colorado Natural Areas Program
CNHP	Colorado Natural Heritage Program
COA	Conditions of Approval
D-E NCA	Dominguez-Escalante National Conservation Area
DOI	Department of the Interior
EIS	environmental impact statement
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
FLPMA	Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976
GIS	Geographical Information Systems
GJFO	Grand Junction Field Office
MOU	Memoranda of Understanding
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act of 1969
NOI	Notice of Intent
OHV	off-highway vehicle
RAC	Resource Advisory Council
RMP	Resource Management Plan
SRMA	Special Recreation Management Area
USDA	US Department of Agriculture
UFO	Uncompahgre Field Office
WSA	Wilderness Study Area
WSR	Wild and Scenic River

SECTION I: INTRODUCTION

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The United States Department of the Interior (DOI), Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is preparing a Resource Management Plan (RMP) for the Dominguez-Escalante National Conservation Area (D-E NCA) and the Dominguez Canyon Wilderness (Wilderness), which was created by Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009 (Public Law 111-11, “the Act” or “Omnibus Act” hereafter) and signed into law on March 30, 2009.

Under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 (Public Law 91-190) and the Council on Environmental Quality’s (CEQ) regulations implementing NEPA (40 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] 1500-1501), federal agencies are required to consider the environmental effects of their actions prior to taking such actions.

Actions that are subject to NEPA include projects and programs that are entirely or partially financed, assisted, conducted, regulated, or approved by federal agencies; new and revised agency rules, regulations, plans, policies, or procedures; and legislative procedures (40 CFR 1508.18). The actions proposed by the BLM as part of the D-E NCA RMP are subject to the requirements of NEPA.

1.1 OVERVIEW OF PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT REQUIREMENTS

Public involvement is a vital and legally required component of both the RMP and EIS processes. Public involvement invests the public in the decision-making process and allows for full environmental disclosure.

Guidance for implementing public involvement under NEPA is codified in 40 CFR Section 1506.6, thereby ensuring that federal agencies make a diligent effort to involve the public in the NEPA process. Section 202 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA) directs the Secretary of the Interior to establish procedures for public involvement during land use planning actions on public lands.

Guidance for implementing public involvement during land use planning actions on public lands can be found in the BLM’s Land Use Planning Handbook (H-1601-1). Public involvement requirements of both NEPA and FLPMA will be satisfied through this joint RMP/EIS process.

1.2 OVERVIEW OF THE RMP/EIS PUBLIC PROCESS

Public involvement for the D-E NCA RMP/EIS is being conducted in the following phases:

- Public scoping before NEPA analysis begins to determine the scope of issues and alternatives to be addressed in the RMP/EIS;

- Public outreach via fliers and news releases, as well as publicly available information on the D-E NCA website ([http://www.blm.gov/co/st/en/nca/D-E NCA.html](http://www.blm.gov/co/st/en/nca/D-E%20NCA.html));
- Collaboration with cooperating agencies (federal, state, local, and tribal governments), and the D-E NCA Advisory Council (AC);
- Public review of and comment on the Draft RMP/EIS, which analyzes likely environmental effects and identifies the BLM's preferred alternative;
- Surveys and focus group meetings conducted by Mesa State's Natural Resources and Land Policy Institute;
- Wild & Scenic River stakeholder group meetings;
- Travel management outreach efforts.

Scoping is an early and open process for determining the scope of issues to be addressed in the RMP/EIS, and for identifying the significant issues related to a proposed action.

Information collected during scoping may also be used to develop a complete range of management alternatives to be addressed in a NEPA document. The process has two components: *internal* scoping and *external* scoping:

Internal scoping is conducted within an agency or cooperating agencies to determine preliminary and anticipated issues and concerns. An interdisciplinary team of BLM GJFO/UFO resource specialists held internal scoping meetings to identify the anticipated planning issues and the methods, procedures, and data to be used in compiling the RMP/EIS. This was reported in a preparation plan, which was released internally.

External scoping is a public process designed to reach beyond the BLM and attempts to identify the concerns and issues of high importance to the public. External scoping helps ensure that real problems are identified early and that they are properly studied, that issues of no concern do not consume time and effort, and that the proposed action and alternatives are balanced, thorough, and able to be implemented.

In accordance with 43 CFR 1610.2(d), the BLM must document the scoping results. The BLM's land use planning guidance (Handbook H-1601-1) requires the preparation of a Scoping Summary Report to capture public input in one document. This report must summarize the separate comments received during the formal external scoping period. It also must describe the issues and management concerns from public scoping meetings, internal scoping meetings, and the pre-plan analysis and must include a discussion of how these comments will be incorporated into the RMP.

1.3 PURPOSE AND NEED FOR THE RMP

The purpose of this Resource Management Plan (RMP) is to provide for long-term protection and conservation of the lands and resource values reflected in the legislation for the Dominguez-Escalante National Conservation Area and Dominguez Canyon Wilderness by establishing the appropriate uses and management of the NCA, including a comprehensive travel management plan and a wilderness plan. This RMP is needed to provide for management of these resources as a unit rather than as a collection of values, establishing the suite of management actions and activities necessary to conserve and

protect for the benefit of current and future generations the unique and important values of the land, including the geological, cultural, archaeological, paleontological, natural, scientific, recreational, wilderness, wildlife, riparian, historical, educational and scenic resources of the public lands, as well as the water resources of area streams, based on seasonally available flows, that are necessary to support aquatic, riparian and terrestrial species and communities, as identified in the Omnibus Public Lands Management Act of 2009. While these lands have long been recognized for the outstanding resource and recreational values that they contain, their designation as a National Conservation Area creates a need to re-assess historic management and ensure that new management approaches provide a level of protection responsive to the legislation for the resources and resource values included in the NCA.

I.4 RMP PROCESS

An RMP is a land use plan that describes broad multiple-use direction for managing public lands administered by the BLM. FLPMA directs the BLM to develop such land use plans to provide for appropriate uses of public land.

Decisions in land use plans guide future land management actions and subsequent site-specific implementation decisions. These decisions establish goals and objectives (desired outcomes) for resource management and the measures needed to achieve them. These measures are expressed as actions and allowable uses (i.e., lands that are open or available for certain uses, including any applicable restrictions, and lands that are closed to certain uses).

The BLM-administered public lands within the D- ENCA planning area are currently managed in accordance with the resource management plans of the Grand Junction and Uncompahgre field offices, as well as an interim, internal management policy. Prior to the Dominguez-Escalante NCA and the Dominguez Canyons Wilderness being established, management guidance for these areas was provided by the Grand Junction RMP (as amended) and the Uncompahgre Basin RMP (as amended). Both plans are currently under revision. The Dominguez-Escalante NCA planning area was excluded from those revisions so that future area management could be developed through this separate D-E NCA planning process.

- **Grand Junction RMP** -- The Grand Junction Resource Area RMP, approved in January 1987, covers approximately 1.28 million acres of public land. Since being approved, the RMP has been amended 12 times and adjusted through plan maintenance 43 times. Amendments relevant to this planning area include:
 - Grand Junction Field Office/Colorado National Monument Interagency Fire Management Plan (updated annually)
 - Allotment management plans
 - Grand Valley Habitat Management Plan
 - Grand Junction Resource Area Wilderness FEIS and Wilderness Study Report
 - Bangs Canyon and North Fruita Desert Recreation Management Plans

- **Uncompahgre Basin Resource Management Plan --** The Uncompahgre Basin Resource Area RMP, approved in July 1989 covers approximately 1.38 million acres of public lands. Amendments relevant to this planning area include:
 - Allotment Management Plans
 - Land Use Disposal Plan (1992)
 - Fire Management Plan (updated annually)

Decisions in these plans will be considered during the process of developing the new RMP. Where existing decisions remain valid and responsive to the purposes of the designation, they may be carried forward into one or more of the alternative management scenarios considered in the planning process. In addition to the Plan Amendments listed above, the planning process will also recognize and acknowledge the information developed through the *Dominguez-Escalante Community Stewardship Plan Amendment*, a planning effort that was never fully initiated; and from the specific comments and information identified during the public discussions prior to NCA designation.

To support the development of the RMP, the BLM will also prepare an EIS that provides a comprehensive evaluation of the environmental impacts of the alternative management scenarios outlined in the RMP. NEPA requires the BLM to consider a range of alternatives in its planning process and to analyze and disclose the potential environmental impacts of proposed RMP decisions. The RMP and EIS will be released concurrently.

1.5 DESCRIPTION OF THE RMP PLANNING AREA

The Dominguez-Escalante NCA and the Dominguez Canyon Wilderness (the Planning Area) consist of approximately 209,610 acres of BLM-administered public lands in Mesa, Montrose, and Delta Counties, Colorado.

The southwest border of the Planning Area is the boundary of the Uncompahgre National Forest. The northwest border of the planning area is Colorado Highway 141, which includes approximately 10 miles of the Tabeguache-Unaweep Scenic and Historic Byway. The approximate northeastern border is US Highway 50. The southeastern boundary is Delta-Nucla (25 Mesa) Road, which runs south to the National Forest boundary (see Map 1-1).

The vast majority of the Planning Area lies within the Colorado Plateau physiographic province, with a small portion of the NCA falling into the Southern Rocky Mountains physiographic province. Elevations within the area range from approximately 4,700 feet to over 8,200 feet above sea level, resulting in great biological and topographical diversity. The NCA's topography and geology is characterized by low elevation sandstone and shale mesas bisected by deep sandstone canyons comprised of sedimentary surface deposits.

The Dominguez Canyon Wilderness is characterized by large mesas dissected by deep red slick-rock canyons and arroyos. The Wilderness possesses outstanding

geological features, spectacular scenery, ecological diversity, and two cascading mountain streams; and provides valuable wildlife habitat.

Vegetation communities within the NCA range from desert shrubland/saltbush in the lowest elevations to isolated stands of Douglas-fir, aspen and spruce-fir in its highest elevations. Visitors to the NCA may see wildlife such as collared lizards, desert bighorn sheep, black bears, mountain lions, golden eagles and peregrine falcons.

Approximately 35 miles of the Lower Gunnison River runs parallel along the entire northeastern Planning Area boundary between the towns of Delta and Whitewater. The Gunnison River, which is increasingly popular with both commercial and private boaters, also contains critical habitat for sensitive native fish. Special features of the planning area also include proximity to the Old Spanish National Historic Trail¹ as well as two designated Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs).

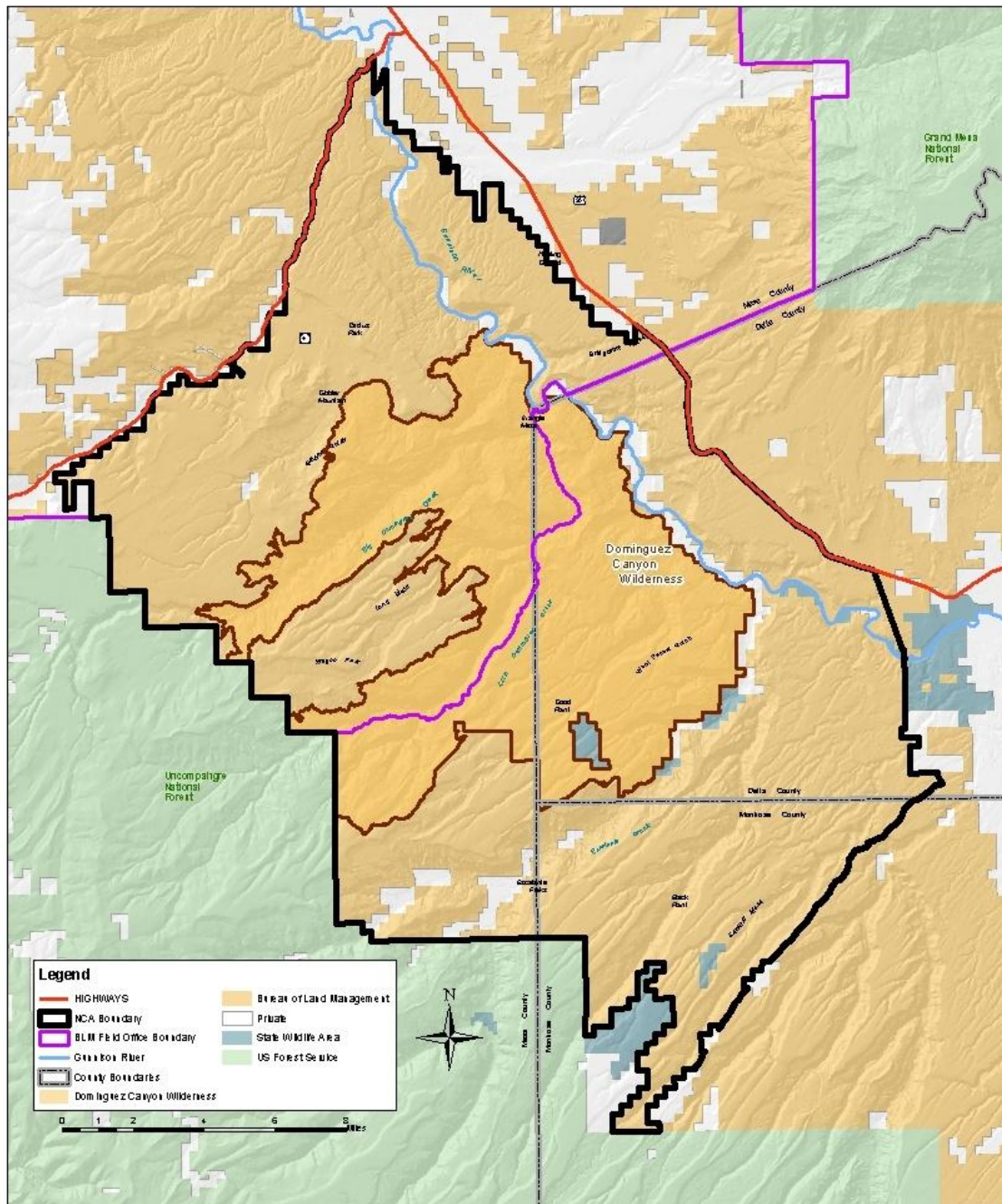
The Escalante Canyon ACEC consists of approximately 1,895 acres designated for sensitive plant species, natural seeps, and several globally-unique plant associations (including beautiful hanging gardens of small-flowered columbine and Eastwood's monkey flower). The Gunnison Gravels/Cactus Park ACEC (5 acres) was designated to protect the scientific and educational values associated with a fluvial gravel deposit that suggests the location of an ancestral river in Unaweep Canyon. The NCA also provides for a number of different types of outstanding dispersed recreation opportunities, with important areas such as the Escalante Canyon Potholes area and the Cactus Park area. The Decision Area for this planning project includes only the BLM-administered land within the NCA boundary.

A map of the planning area is provided in **Map 1-1, Project Planning Area**.

¹ The exact route of the Old Spanish National Historic Trail is still being delineated, but is thought to run near or through the NCA.

Map 1-1 -- Planning Area Map

Dominguez-Escalante National Conservation Area



1.6 DESCRIPTION OF THE SCOPING PROCESS

The BLM follows the public involvement requirements documented in CEQ regulations implementing NEPA (40 CFR 1501.7 for scoping and 1506.6 for public involvement). The BLM also follows public involvement requirements described in the BLM's planning regulations (43 CFR 1601-1610). The BLM solicits comments from relevant agencies and the public, organizes and analyzes all comments received, and then distills them to identify issues that will be addressed during the planning process. These issues define the scope of analysis for the RMP and are used to develop the project alternatives.

1.6.1 NOTICE OF INTENT

The formal public scoping process for the D-E NCA RMP/EIS began on August 3, 2010, with the publication of the Notice of Intent (NOI) in the *Federal Register* (Vol. 75, No. 148, page 45650). A copy of the NOI is included in Appendix A. The NOI notified the public of the BLM's intent to develop an RMP for the D-E NCA; it also initiated the public scoping comment period, which closed on October 1, 2010. Although the formal comment period has ended, the BLM will continue to consider all comments received during the planning process.

The NOI was posted on the project Web site (<http://www.blm.gov/co/st/en/nca/D-E-NCA.html>).

1.6.2 PROJECT WEB SITE

A public Web site was launched to provide the public with the latest information about the RMP/EIS process. The Web site, available on the Internet contains maps and photos of the planning area, public announcements, information about the NCA, and copies of public information documents such as the NOI and newsletter. The site also provided a link to the comment form (Appendix B) that was used for submitting comments during the public scoping comment period.

1.6.3 NEWS RELEASE/FLIER

On August 11, 2010, the BLM issued a news release announcing the start of the scoping period for the D-E NCA RMP/EIS to news media outlets in western Colorado. Fliers were also distributed in Grand Junction and Delta. A copy of the news release is provided in Appendix C.

The news release and fliers provided the dates and venues for two scoping open houses, where attendees could pick up a comment form for submitting scoping comments, or learn other methods for submitting comments, including dedicated email and postal addresses.

The BLM will publish "*Canyon Clarion*" newsletters monthly and post the newsletter on the project Web site. Copies will be available at the front desks of GJFO and UFO.

Participants may request to receive newsletters and other project information through electronic or postal mail.

1.6.4 SCOPING OPEN HOUSES

The BLM hosted two open houses to provide the public with opportunities to become involved, to learn about the project and the planning process, to meet the D-E NCA RMP team members, and to offer comments. The public was notified of the open houses by news release and flier. Information on the open houses is provided in **Table 1-1**.

Table 1-1 Scoping Open House Information

Venue	Town	Date	Attendees
Courtyard Hotel	Grand Junction	8/30	33
Heddles Rec. Center	Delta	8/31	18
			Total Attendees 51

Note: All meetings were from 6-8 PM.

Scoping meetings were held in an open house format to encourage participants to discuss concerns and questions with BLM staff representatives. The BLM gave a short presentation to provide an overview of the RMP process and present information about public involvement opportunities. Site and resource maps illustrated the current situation and management techniques practiced among different resources and land areas. In addition, summaries of resource issues were available to provide an overview of current management practices and issues. Copies of the project newsletter and scoping comment forms were also available. As shown in Table 1-1, 51 people attended the open houses.

1.6.6 MAILING LIST

The BLM compiled a mailing list of approximately 120 individuals, agencies, and organizations that expressed interest in the D-E NCA planning area prior to designation. Each entity was mailed or emailed an initial notice with project and open house information. Attendees at the scoping open houses were added to the mailing list if they wanted to receive or continue to receive project information.

In addition, all individuals or organizations who submitted scoping comments were added to the mailing list. Requests to be added to or to remain on the official D-E NCA RMP distribution list will continue to be accepted throughout the planning process.

1.7 COLLABORATIVE INVOLVEMENT PROCESS

In addition to formal scoping, the BLM is coordinating with Mesa State College, cooperating city, county, state, federal and tribal agencies, as well as with a specially created D-E NCA Advisory Council.

These efforts are summarized below. The BLM will continue to meet with interested agencies and organizations throughout the planning process, as appropriate, and will coordinate closely with cooperating partners.

1.7.1 RECREATION FOCUS GROUPS

Mesa State College's Natural Resources and Land Policy Institute has acted as a key partner in providing opportunities for the public to give the BLM input on the D-E NCA. This input included a community assessment and recreation focus group meetings prior to the NCA's designation, as well as surveys and focus group meetings post-designation. In cooperation with the D-E NCA, the Institute is facilitating small group discussions with representatives of local governments in the planning area to discuss their visions for their communities and for the public lands that surround their communities.

A series of focus group sessions (informal conversations with recreation users and other interested parties) were held in September and October, sponsored by the Natural Resources and Land Policy Institute of Mesa State College.

The D-E NCA was broken into planning zones to facilitate in-depth conversations.

Zone 1 is the Gunnison Bluffs or Hunting Grounds area, which stretches from US Highway 50 to the bluffs above the Gunnison River on the north side.

Zone 2 is the river corridor and riparian area along the Gunnison and the riparian corridor along Escalante Creek, up to the potholes.

Zone 3 is the area on the west side of the NCA from US Highway 141 to the edge of the Wilderness area and from the bluffs above the river on the south to Divide Road.

Zone 4 is the designated Wilderness area itself in the NCA.

Zone 5 is the rest of the NCA, which includes the area of Wagon Park and the eastern side of the NCA around Sawmill Mesa, including Escalante Canyon.

D-E NCA focus group meetings were:

Zone	City	Date	Attendees
Zone 1	Grand Junction	9/29	12
Zone 2	Delta	9/22	12
Zone 3	Grand Junction	9/27	22
Zone 4	Grand Junction	10/4	28
Zone 4	Delta	10/6	14
Zone 5	Delta	9/29	32

All Grand Junction focus group meetings were held at the Mesa County Courthouse Annex. All Delta focus group meetings were held at the Delta-Montrose Technical College.

Timothy Casey, Ph.D. field coordinator for the Institute, said there were 120 participants, constituting a diverse group of environmentalists, motorized recreationists, as well as state and local government officials. There were 58 attendees at the Delta meetings and 62 at the Grand Junction meetings.

In addition to data gleaned from the focus groups, the Institute has collected survey data from recreationists intercepted in various parts of the NCA. The Institute plans to deliver a statistical report and analysis to the BLM by mid-February.

1.7.2 COOPERATING AGENCY COLLABORATION

A cooperating agency is any federal, state, or local government agency or Indian tribe that enters into a formal agreement with the lead federal agency to help develop an environmental analysis.

More specifically, cooperating agencies “work with the BLM, sharing knowledge and resources, to achieve desired outcomes for public lands and communities within statutory and regulatory frameworks” (BLM Land Use Planning Handbook H-1601-1). The benefits of enhanced collaboration among agencies in preparing NEPA analyses are:

- Disclosing relevant information early in the analytical process;
- Applying available technical expertise and staff support;
- Avoiding duplication with other federal, state, tribal, and local procedures; and
- Establishing a mechanism for addressing intergovernmental issues.

In September, 2010, the BLM wrote to local, state, federal, and tribal representatives, inviting them to participate as cooperating agencies for the D-E NCA RMP. As of December, 2010, 8 agencies had agreed to participate in the RMP as designated cooperating agencies, and 5 had finalized Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) with the BLM for the purposes of the D-E NCA RMP/EIS (Table 1-2).

Table 1-2 Cooperating Agency Participation

Agencies and Tribes Invited to be Cooperators

Agencies that Accepted (X) as of late 2010

Agencies	Accepted
City of Delta	X
City of Montrose	X
City of Grand Junction	X
Delta County	X
Mesa County	X
Montrose County	X
Colorado Department of Natural Resources (includes Division of Wildlife and Colorado Water Conservation Board)	X
Colorado State Historic Preservation Office	
Colorado State Parks	
US Fish and Wildlife Service	
US Geological Survey	
USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service	
USDA Forest Service	X
Ute Indian Tribe (Uintah and Ouray Reservation)	
Southern Ute Indian Tribe	
Ute Mountain Ute Indian Tribe	

Regardless of whether the above mentioned agencies accepted formal cooperating agency statuses, BLM will continue to provide information, request information where needed and consult as requested.

1.7.3 D-E NCA ADVISORY COUNCIL

The 10-member D-E NCA Advisory Council is a committee established by the Secretary of the Interior to provide advice or recommendations to BLM management in developing the Resource Management Plan for the NCA and Wilderness (Omnibus Act). The Advisory Council includes members appointed to represent categories established by the Omnibus Act.

Council members will serve three year terms, and the Council may remain in existence for up to a year following completion of the plan. Recommendations are based on consensus-building and collaboration.

The Advisory Council convened its first meeting on January 5, 2011. Information on meeting times, dates, and locations will be published in the Federal Register and on the NCA's webpage, located at <http://www.blm.gov/co/st/en/nca/D-E NCA.html>.

Below are the ten members of the Advisory Council:

Steve Acquafresca of Grand Junction, is a Mesa County Commissioner and fruit grower. He was selected after considering the recommendations of the Mesa County Commissioners.

William (Bill) Harris of Montrose, a past representative of the International Mountain Biking Association and a current board member of the Colorado Plateau Mountain Biking Trail Association. He is also a past president of the Colorado Archaeological Society. He was selected after considering the recommendations of the Montrose County Commissioners. Bill also represents recreation, primarily mountain biking, and cultural resources.

Jan McCracken of Delta, is the outgoing Delta County Commissioner and current co-chair of the Public Lands Partnership. She was selected after considering the recommendations of the Delta County Commissioners.

Oscar Massey of Whitewater, is a rancher with federal grazing permits within the NCA since the mid-1970s. He was selected to represent grazing permit holders.

Katie Steele of Grand Junction, is the co-chair of the Colorado Riverfront Commission and has chaired the Robb River Rally event in the Grand Valley. She was selected to represent dispersed recreation and historic resources.

Jason Beason of Paonia, is the special monitoring projects coordinator for the Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory and the vice-president of the Black Canyon Audubon Society. He was selected to represent wildlife and habitat values.

Tamera Minnick of Grand Junction, is an associate professor of Environmental Science and Technology at Mesa State College. She was selected to represent scientific, educational, and ecological values.

Terry Kimber of Delta, has been hiking, jeeping, hunting and camping in the NCA area for 30 years. He was selected to represent the traditional uses of hunting and dispersed recreation.

Neil “Mike” Wilson of Eckert, is a member of the Colorado Off-Highway Vehicle Coalition and vice-president of Thunder Mountain Wheelers. He was selected to represent motorized recreation interests.

Joe Neuhof of Grand Junction, is the new executive director of the Colorado Canyons Association, a 501(c)(3), and outgoing Western Slope director of the Colorado Environmental Coalition. He was selected to represent environmental and wilderness values.

SECTION 2: COMMENT SUMMARY

2.1 METHOD OF COMMENT COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

A total of 66 written submissions were received during the D-E NCA public scoping period. This does not include a count of individual form letters, which were counted as one submission (the BLM received over 2,000 identical form letters). Because the scoping process is used to identify issues and concerns to be addressed during planning, identical form letters were not given any more weight than any one submission received by the BLM. These 66 submissions were supplemented by 16 D-E NCA-related submissions that were received during the Grand Junction Field Office scoping process and 13 D-E NCA-related submissions that were received during the Uncompahgre Field Office scoping process, for a total of 95 submissions.

The most common format used for submissions was email. Submissions were also delivered in person at the public scoping meetings or mailed via US Mail.

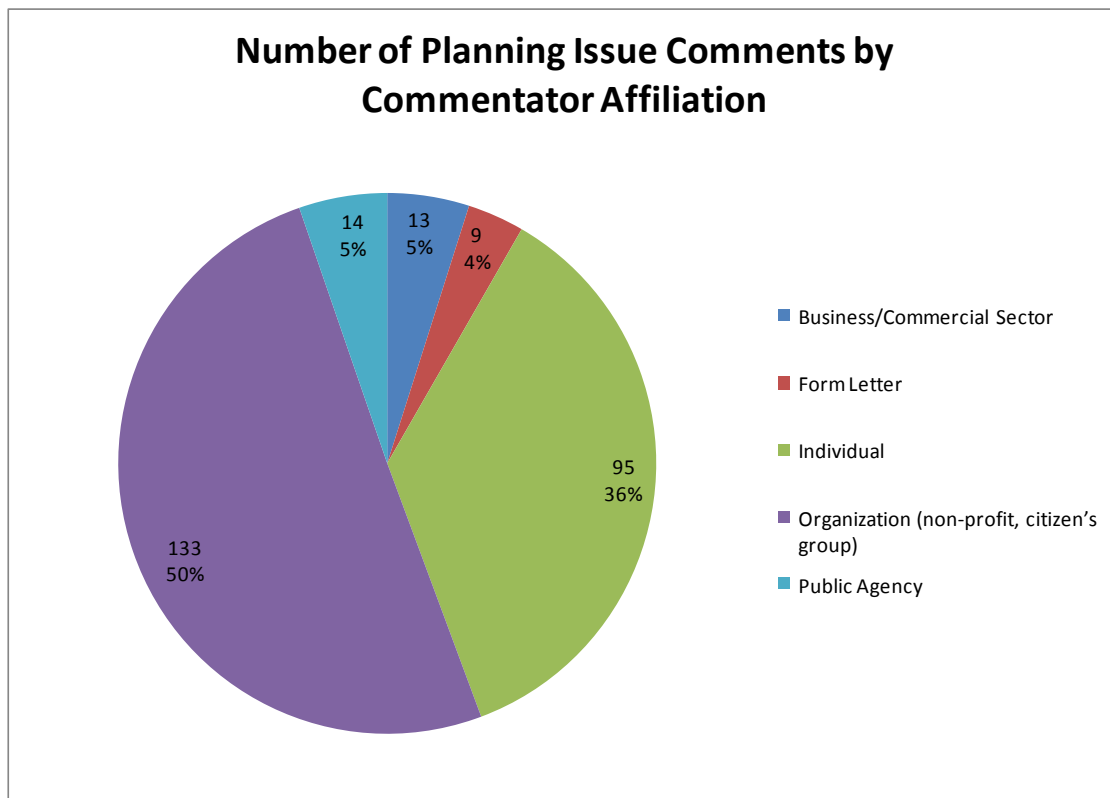
Individual comments were identified within each submission. Individual comments were generated by focusing on specific recommendations, concerns or issues described in each submission.

Most written submissions included more than one comment, so the 95 submissions yielded 284 discrete comments. At this point, comments that did not address D-E NCA planning issues were excluded from further analysis. This included comments that addressed issues outside of the D-E NCA planning area, or that addressed national policy issues, such as wilderness designation. This lowered the number of comments to 264 substantive ‘planning issue’ comments.

To ensure that public comments were properly registered and that none were overlooked, a multi-phase management and tracking system was used. First, written submissions were logged and numbered. Once all comments were received and documented, the BLM assigned a planning issue classification to each comment.

To assist with the analysis, the BLM entered comment codes into a database and organized comment codes by planning issue categories and commentator affiliation. Finally, these identifiers were queried and tallied to provide information on planning and other issue categories.

Figure 2-1 Number of Comments by Commentator Affiliation



2.2 Number of Comments by Planning Issue Category

Each of the 264 'planning issue' comments was placed into 1 of 20 issue categories. Table 2-2 and Figure 2-3 show the number of comments received by planning issue category.

The focus of this report is to provide an overview of the overarching themes presented in the comments. Interested parties can view scoping comment submissions in their entirety at the GJFO.

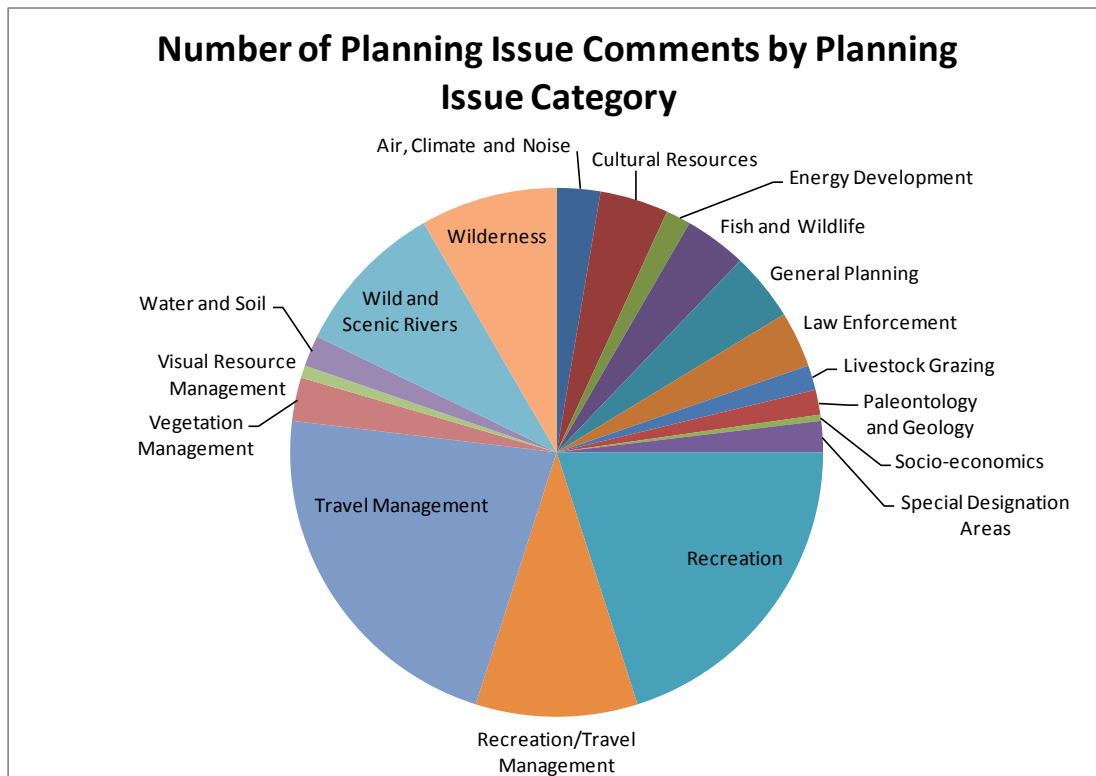
Travel management was the most commonly addressed issue category. There were 58 comments that addressed travel management alone, and 26 that addressed travel management as it relates to recreation.

The category of recreation came next (53), followed by wild and scenic rivers (25) and wilderness (22). Cultural resources and general planning topics each received 11 comments, followed by 10 for fish and wildlife, nine for law enforcement, seven each for vegetation management and air, climate and noise, five for special designation areas and for water and soil, four each for livestock grazing and paleontology and geology and two for visual resource management. One comment was received that addressed socio-economics.

Table 2-2 Comment categories

Category	Comments
Travel Management	58
Recreation/Travel Management	26
Recreation	53
Wild & Scenic Rivers	25
Wilderness	22
Cultural Resources	11
General Planning	11
Fish & Wildlife	10
Law Enforcement	9
Vegetation Management	7
Air, Climate & Noise	7
Special Designation	5
Water & Soil	5
Paleontology & Geology	4
Livestock Grazing	4
Energy Development	4
Visual Resource Management	2
Socio-economics	1

Figure 2-3 Comment categories



SECTION 3: ISSUE SUMMARY

In analyzing comments, BLM staff were looking for new themes or issues that require consideration in the planning process. While the number of comments may be useful as a general guide, the focus is on content, not solely the number of comments.

The most valuable scoping comment would cause BLM staff to say, “Why didn’t we think of that?”

Secondly, only substantive “planning issue” comments were considered for analysis by the BLM. A substantive “planning issue” scoping comment is one that has practical importance, relevance or value for the Dominguez-Escalante National Conservation Area resource management plan (RMP).

In scoping, the BLM asks for public feedback that it can use in determining the issues and criteria that should be addressed in an RMP. Therefore, in order to be substantive, scoping comments needed to address issues and criteria specifically and explicitly. Consider the following example of a substantive comment:

- *The BLM should identify and protect nesting habitat for Great Blue Herons in its Dominguez-Escalante resource management plan (RMP). As an avid bird watcher, I often float the Gunnison River in order to observe Great Blue Herons in their natural habitat. I have noticed Great Blue Heron numbers are declining on the Gunnison River in recent years.*

Comments that were too broad and/or general are not useful for planning and were considered non-substantive. Non-substantive comments do not address specific issues or criteria. The BLM is not required to address non-substantive comments in its plan. Consider the following hypothetical example:

- *The BLM should just leave me and my friends alone.*

Issue identification is the first step of the nine-step BLM planning process. As defined in the BLM Land Use Planning Handbook (H-1601-1), planning issues include concerns or controversies about existing and potential land and resource allocations, levels of resource use, production, and related management practices. Issues include concerns, needs, and resource use, development, and protection opportunities to consider in RMP preparation.

3.1 TRAVEL MANAGEMENT

Comprehensive travel management is defined as the proactive planning and on-the-ground management of road and trail travel networks. Travel management is a support function for a wide array of resources and resource uses in the NCA, and includes

management of routes used for motorized, mechanized (i.e. bicycling) and non-motorized travel.

BLM staff created a separate outreach process for travel management, with open houses held Sept. 9 and 10, in Delta and Grand Junction respectively. Comments on the travel management plan are welcome through May 1.

In preliminary planning, BLM staff identified the following issues and management concerns that would be relevant to travel management:

- What are the principle travel priorities for this area for the public, as well as for administrative and resource management activities (e.g., such as research and monitoring, grazing management, or emergency or fire access)?
- What routes should be designated as open, closed, or limited for all travel modes (from motorized to non-motorized), based on opportunities to be provided and/or the need to protect resources?
- How will transportation facilities, including the trail system, anticipate and proactively prepare for future urban expansion? What linkages could be developed to connect trails in the NCA to urban and riverfront trail systems?
- What options exist for improving access into Big Dominguez Canyon at Bridgeport?

Public scoping comments came up with the following issues and concerns:

Travel Management	58
Create accurate inventory	1
Exclude routes from travel management inventory	1
Increase route maintenance	2
Increase signage	4
Increase trails	1
Minimize motorized recreation impacts	8
Old Spanish Trail management	1
Opposes new motorized routes/supports route closures	11
Opposes night restrictions	1
Protect private property rights	1
Protect/conserves native wildlife	1
Recommendations for travel management categories	3
Supports new motorized routes/opposes closures	22
Supports new non-motorized routes	1

Comments were coded in this category if they addressed specific route designations (motorized, mechanized, open, closed, etc) or route systems in the NCA, or if they addressed issues that were directly related to travel management (for example, impacts to wildlife from travel or the presence of signs along routes). Because comments relating to

travel management often overlapped with recreation, a separate combined travel management/recreation category was created.

The BLM received 58 comments, or 22 percent of the total comments received on planning issues, that were focused on travel management and transportation issues. Commentators included numerous individuals, three environmental organizations, and representatives of recreational user groups.

Many of the comments (22) sought new motorized routes and opposed closing existing motorized routes. A total of 10 comments opposed new trails and supported closure of some trails as a way to protect resources. There were also comments asking for better route maintenance and more signage.

Recreation/Travel Management	26
Encourage education	1
Increase route maintenance	2
Increase signage	1
Minimize trails in wilderness	1
Provide travel info to public	1
Supports new bike trails	4
Supports new motorized trails/opposes trail closures	16

The BLM received 26 comments or 10.1 percent of the total comments, focused on the overlap between recreation and travel management. The majority of comments endorsed the idea of new motorized trails and opposed trail closures. The support of new motorized trails generically was seen in 20 comments. The rest of the comments encouraged public education, increased signage and route maintenance. There was one comment urging the BLM to minimize trails in the wilderness.

When comparing the *internal* and *external* scoping, the public scoping comments addressed some specific management concerns that were not preliminarily identified by BLM staff. These related to concerns regarding the creation of a travel management inventory, route maintenance and signage, and night restrictions on motorized travel.

3.2 RECREATION

The NCA and Wilderness offer tremendously varied recreational opportunities from boating to hiking to motorized use to horseback riding. The rugged, scenic nature of the Wilderness' canyons and mesas provide outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive, unconfined recreation. The Gunnison River and the opportunity to take pleasure drives up Escalante Canyon provide additional opportunities to experience the spectacular canyon scenery from different vantage points. The Cactus Park, Sawmill Mesa, Hunting Grounds and Wagon Park areas provide opportunities for motorized and mechanized recreation. Climbers, hunters, recreational gold panners, and kayakers also recreate in the area at specific locations or during specific times of the year. Special

recreation permits have been issued in the area for uses including big game/lion hunting, river recreation, and special events.

Initial planning by BLM staff identified the following:

- What recreational experiences and outcomes should be used to focus future recreation management in the NCA?
- What use levels would provide those experiences and outcomes while still protecting wilderness values in the Dominguez Canyon wilderness?
- How will recreational services and facilities, including the trail system, anticipate and proactively prepare for future urban expansion?
- What visitor services (e.g., facilities and developments) are necessary to provide for an optimal recreational experience while also protecting the resources and the undeveloped nature of the NCA?
- What criteria should be placed on future Special Recreation Permits to ensure protection of the purposes for which the area was designated?
- What criteria should be placed on casual recreational use activities to ensure protection of the purposes for which the area was designated?
- What opportunities could be created for the NCA trails system to connect with the Riverfront Trail System, joining the cities of Delta and Grand Junction?

Public scoping comments raised the following issues and concerns:

Recreation	53
Improve boat access	1
Increase signage	1
Limit group size	1
Minimize recreation facilities	2
Opposes group size restrictions	1
Opposes new motorized recreation areas/supports motorized recreation closures	1
Opposes night restrictions	2
Opposes shooting and camping restrictions	2
Opposes shooting restrictions	1
Prohibit paint balls	3
Protect private property rights	2
Restrict camping	2
Restrict shooting	1
Supports dispersed camping	3
Supports gold prospecting	7
Supports hands-off approach	1
Supports more quiet recreation opportunities	5
Supports new motorized recreation areas/opposes motorized recreation closures	15
Supports new mountain bike recreation areas	2

Recreation is both the most commented-on resource use in the NCA and is cited as a purpose of the designation. Scoping comments were coded in this category if they addressed restrictions on recreation (both in support and in opposition), if they addressed particular types of recreation, or if they addressed area-wide recreation designations (i.e. the creation of special recreation management areas, which are known in the BLM as SRMAs), either explicitly or implicitly.

Judging from the number of comments, many people enjoy motorized recreation – OHVs, motorcycles and four-wheel drive. That activity engendered 15 comments in support of new trails and opposition to trail closures. There was one comment in opposition of new trails and support of trail closures. Other commentators enjoy quiet recreation (5). This is consistent with the preliminary findings of surveys and focus group meetings conducted by Mesa State College.

Gold panners submitted seven comments in support of panning, while there were two comments in favor of new mountain bike trails.

Quite a few comments were solidly in favor of the status quo, opposing further restrictions, but there were comments in favor of prohibiting paint ball (to protect resources) and restricting shooting (to increase public safety). There were also comments favoring new signage and boat access.

Comparing *internal* and *external* scoping, public comments easily fall within the scope of issues and concerns identified by BLM staff in preliminary planning.

3.3 WILD and SCENIC RIVERS

The Wild and Scenic River designation process occurs in three phases. These are eligibility, suitability and designation. Stream segments in the NCA were assessed for eligibility before the D-E NCA planning process started by the Grand Junction Field Office and Uncompahgre Field Office sides of the NCA.

To be eligible, a river segment must be free-flowing and possess one or more outstandingly remarkable values. For NCA stream segments, these include scenic, recreational, geological, fish or wildlife related, historic, cultural, botanical, hydrological, or paleontological values.

The next step in the Wild and Scenic River process is determining segment suitability. Suitability will be studied during this planning effort, and an independent Wild and Scenic River stakeholder group has been created to provide the BLM with public comments for this phase of the process.

Preliminary planning by BLM staff identified the following issues and concerns:

- What stream segments are suitable for designation as Wild, Scenic, or Recreational?
- How should administrative use be managed to protect special area values?

Public scoping raised the following issues and concerns:

Wild and Scenic Rivers	25
Encourage public participation	1
Opposes WSR designation	14
Supports grazing	1
Supports WSR designation	8
(blank)	1

Comments were coded into this category if they addressed either the eligibility or suitability of river or stream segments within the NCA. Because eligibility status was determined prior to the start of the NCA planning process, comments were pulled into this scoping report from both the Grand Junction Field Office and Uncompahgre Field Office scoping periods, when those comments specifically addressed river segments that fall within the NCA's boundaries.

The majority of comments (14) opposed WSR designation and came from livestock and water development interests. Meanwhile, eight comments favored greater protection for river segments in the D-E NCA and Wilderness.

There were no new issues identified when comparing *internal* and *external* scoping.

3.4 WILDERNESS

The Dominguez Canyon Wilderness includes 66,280 acres, or approximately 1/3 of the planning area. In addition, approximately 3,000 acres of the Dominguez Canyon Wilderness Study Area (WSA) remain around the periphery of the Dominguez Canyon Wilderness. Wilderness designation and the release of WSA's from wilderness management are decisions that can only be made by Congress, therefore, these two subjects are outside the scope of this RMP and will not be addressed.

A stand-alone Wilderness Plan will be developed during the alternative development process. Some management measures will be common to all alternatives, while others may vary slightly in approach. However, *all* alternatives will provide a level of protection and preservation consistent with the requirements of the Wilderness Act.

In accordance with the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA) and a December 2010 order by the Secretary of the Interior, the BLM shall maintain a current inventory of land under its jurisdiction and identify within that inventory lands with wilderness characteristics that are *outside* of the areas designated as Wilderness Areas or Wilderness Study Areas and that are pending before Congress or units of the National Wilderness Preservation System.

The BLM shall describe such inventoried lands as "Lands With Wilderness Characteristics (LWWC)," share this information with the public, and integrate this information into its land management decisions. All BLM offices shall protect these

inventoried wilderness characteristics when undertaking land use planning and when making project-level decisions by avoiding impairment of such wilderness characteristics unless the BLM determines that impairment of wilderness characteristics is appropriate and consistent with applicable requirements of law and other resource management considerations.

Where the BLM concludes that authorization of uses that may impair wilderness characteristics is appropriate, the BLM shall document the reasons for its determination and consider measures to minimize impacts on those wilderness characteristics. Where the BLM concludes that protection of wilderness characteristics is appropriate, the BLM shall designate these lands as “Wild Lands” through land use planning.

If areas within the NCA (but outside of the designated wilderness area or WSA) are deemed to have wilderness character (meaning they are natural and provide outstanding opportunities for solitude and unconfined recreation), then the RMP must address the management of those wilderness characteristics. While the BLM is not mandated to protect LWWCs as it would protect congressionally designated wilderness areas, a full range of alternatives would include at least one alternative that protected the wilderness character of those lands.

Initial planning (or internal scoping) by BLM staff identified the following issues and concerns:

- How will the Dominguez Canyon Wilderness be managed to protect wilderness values and provide outstanding opportunities for solitude and/or primitive and unconfined recreation?
- Is special management still warranted for the relevant and important values recognized in the two existing ACEC nominations? Given the management that will be developed to protect the resources identified in the Act, what additional lands should be considered for ACEC status?
- How should administrative use be managed to protect special area values?
- How will grazing activities, including maintenance and construction of rangeland improvement facilities, be managed to protect wilderness values?
- Are additional administrative designations (e.g., Scenic or Back Country Byways, All American Roads, national recreation trails, watchable wildlife viewing sites) needed to provide recognition, protection, and enjoyment of resources within the NCA?
- What additional management guidelines are necessary to manage the remaining portion of the Wilderness Study Area under the Interim Management Guidelines? How should this area be managed if released by Congress?
- Are there other lands with wilderness characteristics other than wilderness and Wilderness Study Areas, and if so, how should they be managed?

Public, or external scoping produced the following issues and concerns:

Wilderness	22
Inventory/protect wilderness characteristics outside existing Wilderness or WSA	12
Opposes wilderness protections	1
Protect wilderness characteristics within existing Wilderness or WSA	9

Comments were coded into this category if they addressed specific management approaches within the wilderness area, specific LWWCs, or the BLM's process for identifying LWWCs. While a number of submissions opposed the creation of the Dominguez Canyon Wilderness, these comments were excluded from this report because wilderness designation can only be addressed by Congress, not the BLM. Therefore, these comments were not considered to address a planning issue.

Over half (12) of the comments focused on creating an inventory and a protection plan for lands with wilderness character outside of designated wilderness or WSA. An additional 9 comments were focused on protecting particular wilderness values within the Dominguez Wilderness. Only one comment opposed additional wilderness protections.

There were no new issues identified when comparing *internal* and *external* comments.

3.5 CULTURAL RESOURCES

The red-rock canyons and sandstone bluffs in the NCA contain cultural resources from PaleoIndian artifacts that extend back 10,000 years, on up to cultural artifacts that date back to early European settlement, which began in the late 1800s in the NCA. Minimum requirements for the protection of cultural resources are mandated by the Historic Sites Act of 1935, the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, the Archaeological Resources Protection Act of 1979, the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act of 1990, and BLM-specific guidance. The BLM must consult with American Indian tribes with an interest in the planning area. Additional management (management that exceeds the legal requirements established by Congress and national BLM policy manuals) of cultural resources will be addressed in the NCA RMP.

In the BLM's preliminary planning for D-E NCA, the following issues emerged:

- Are any additional special designations necessary to support and enhance the protection and interpretation of these resources?
- How should the cultural resources and archaeological values (prehistoric and historic) of the area be protected and preserved, while still allowing for appropriate information/education efforts?
- Are any additional special designations necessary to support and enhance the protection and interpretation of these resources?

- What areas within the larger landscape are considered by Native Americans to be sacred sites or landscapes, and what management measures are needed to ensure that traditional uses are able to occur and sites are protected?
- How should scientific research be conducted if determined to be appropriate through the planning process?
- Given the goals, objectives and management direction currently being developed through a national planning process for the Old Spanish National Historic Trail, what additional resource conflicts, needed visitor services, and recreation and interpretive opportunities should be resolved or developed?

Public scoping comments were coded into this category if they addressed tribal consultation, or if they addressed particular management strategies for cultural resources within the NCA.

Cultural Resources	11
Cultural consultation	2
Old Spanish Trail management	1
Protect/conservate cultural resources	8

The majority of comments emphasized the need to protect and conserve cultural resources, such as rock art and camp sites used by Ute Indians and or ancient PaleoIndian groups. One comment suggested tying into the Old Spanish National Historic Trail for interpretative information, visitor access and services. The BLM was also urged to consult with professional archeologists on the best way to protect rock art and potential archeological dig sites.

None of the public comments fell outside the realm of issues raised during BLM's preliminary planning.

3.6 GENERAL PLANNING

The D-E NCA Preparation Plan dealt with specific issues and more generalized management concerns, but did not deal with the topic area of general planning. The public scoping process identified a number of concerns about BLM management and planning, as follows.

Public scoping comments that were coded into this category addressed planning issues that could not be categorized into a particular resource or resource use category. Instead, these comments addressed planning-wide management decisions in the NCA

General Planning	11
Be selective in use of adaptive management	1
Encourage public participation	1
Protect NCA values	4
Supports hands-off approach	1
Supports multiple use	2
Supports single use	1
Supports wilderness values	1

Comments were diverse, ranging from urging the BLM to protect NCA values to endorsing a “hands-off” management policy. Some supported multiple use, while others supported single use.

3.7 FISH and WILDLIFE

Public lands in the planning area provide habitat for a variety of wildlife species including mule deer, golden eagle, turkey, elk, mountain lion, black bear, and collared lizards. Hunting is a popular activity in the NCA in the fall and winter months. A number of special status species are also known to inhabit the NCA. These will be considered under BLM’s Special Status Species Policy.

Special status species include federally threatened or endangered species that are protected under the Endangered Species Act, as well as BLM sensitive species that are identified at the state level by the BLM. These special status species range from desert bighorn sheep to federally endangered fish in the Gunnison River. While fish and wildlife are managed by the Colorado Division of Wildlife, their habitat is managed by the BLM. Any number of management decisions could impact fish and wildlife in the NCA.

Preliminary planning issues for these topics included:

- Where is special management needed to restore, maintain, or enhance priority species (including special status species) and their habitats?
- How should uses, including recreational use, grazing, motorized & mechanized vehicle use, etc., be managed to provide for wildlife (including special status species) habitat needs?
- What interpretive priorities could be established to enhance the public’s understanding of wildlife (including special status species) and habitat needs in the NCA?

Public scoping comments were coded into the Fish and Wildlife category if they addressed management actions as they relate to fish and wildlife in the NCA.

Fish and Wildlife	10
Opposes additional wildlife protections	1
Protect/conserv native wildlife	8
Protect/conserv wildlife	1

The vast majority of comments favored the protection and conservation of wildlife. There was one comment opposed to additional wildlife protections.

Public comments all fell within the framework of preliminary planning issues.

3.8 LAW ENFORCEMENT

BLM law enforcement has a wide range of responsibilities that go beyond public safety and enforcement of regulations, to include protection of cultural resources, wildlife and facilities.

Public scoping comments were coded into this category if they addressed particular law enforcement approaches or if they addressed new regulations that related to public safety.

Law Enforcement	9
Increase law enforcement	1
Prohibit glass containers	4
Protect private property rights	1
Supports collaborative law enforcement	3

There were four comments urging the BLM to prohibit the use of glass containers in the planning area, citing safety and the difficulty of cleaning up broken glass. One comment sought increased law enforcement, while three urged collaboration with other law enforcement agencies.

BLM staff had not identified any specific planning issues related to law enforcement. The public scoping comments all deal with management concerns.

3.9 VEGETATION MANAGEMENT

The vegetation of the NCA ranges from sparse desert shrub lands in the low elevations of the NCA, nearest Highway 50 and the Gunnison River, to isolated stands of Douglas fir and Subalpine fir in the higher elevations of the NCA, nearest the NCA boundary with the Uncompahgre National Forest. Vegetation management in the BLM includes treatments done to increase forage for livestock and wildlife, the management of firewood and fuel wood harvests, weed control treatments and fuel treatments done to decrease fire risk.

Lands within the NCA were most recently assessed and analyzed for land health during 2007, 2009 and 2010 for the Dominguez and Escalante land health planning areas. Those assessments provided a substantial base of biological and ecological information that will help guide this planning effort.

Preliminary planning issues include:

- What role should fire play in the NCA and Wilderness? What treatments are necessary to reduce the impacts associated with fire, insects, non-native/invasive species and disease?
- What goals, objectives, and management actions, including desired future conditions and land restoration priorities, are necessary to continue progress toward achieving land health standards?
- This area is a past and potential source for small forest products (firewood and Christmas trees). Should the area continue to be available for these uses in the future, and if so, what criteria should be established to ensure that these projects further the purposes for which the NCA was established?

Comments were coded into this category if they addressed specific vegetation treatments or vegetation uses, or if they addressed specific management approaches for vegetation in the NCA.

Vegetation Management	7
Restore/protect native vegetation	2
Restrict forest product collection	2
Supports forest product collection	3

Comments both supported and opposed forest product collection (mostly wood cutting). There were also comments asking the BLM to restore and protect native vegetation.

Public comments fall within preliminary planning issues and concerns.

3.10 AIR, CLIMATE & NOISE

The temperature of the planet's atmosphere is regulated by a balance of radiation received from the sun and the amount of that radiation absorbed or reflected back by the earth and atmosphere. Since the beginning of the Industrial Age, there has been a marked increase in atmospheric concentrations of greenhouse gases as a result of human activities. This has contributed to observed climatic variability beyond the historic norm, in a phenomenon known as global climate change. Climate change poses new challenges for public land management, as plants and animals respond to climatic changes. Predictions of the impact of climate change on Western Colorado include smaller winter snowpack, accelerated spread of non-native plants, and increased drought frequency and severity. BLM management can have an impact on greenhouse gas emissions, as well as the ability of plants and animals to adapt to climate change. In addition, management decisions can have an impact on the air quality and soundscape of the NCA and surrounding areas.

Preliminary planning issues and management concerns included:

- What effects might a changing climate have on the resources in the planning area, and how would the resource management approach respond?
- Which reasonably foreseeable activities under each alternative would produce emissions, and what potential mitigation measures or carbon sequestration actions could be undertaken?
- What types of management practices should be considered to reduce air quality emissions and impacts, where they are predicted to be of concern?

Public scoping comments were coded into this category if they addressed any aspect of climate change, noise or air quality as they relate to the NCA.

Air, Climate and Noise	7
Analyze and preserve the soundscape	1
Dust control	1
Dust control from OHVs	1
Examine climate change impacts	1
Include climate change mitigation and adaptation plans	3

Comments included a couple of requests to control dust and one request to preserve a quiet soundscape. Three comments urged the BLM to consider how the agency might mitigate for climate change and make plans to adapt to climate change.

One public scoping comment requested consideration of the soundscape of the NCA and will not be treated as a new planning issue. The remaining issues identified by the public all fall within the reach of preliminary planning issues and concerns.

3.1 | SPECIAL DESIGNATION

Special Designation Areas include congressional designations such as NCAs, wilderness areas, and Wild and Scenic Rivers. The BLM also has the ability to administratively designate areas, particularly Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs), through the land use planning process.

Two ACECs currently exist within the NCA -- the Escalante Canyon ACEC and the Cactus Park/Gunnison Gravels ACEC. The Escalante ACEC (1,895 acres) was designated for unique plant assemblages and contains sensitive plant species, natural seeps, and several globally-unique plant associations including beautiful hanging gardens of small-flowered columbine and Eastwood's monkey flower. The Cactus Park/Gunnison Gravels ACEC (5 acres) was designated to protect scientific evidence of the ancestral river that is thought to have formed Unaweep Canyon.

Preliminary planning issues:

- Is special management still warranted for the relevant and important values recognized in the two existing ACEC nominations? Given the management that will be developed to protect the resources identified in the Act, what additional lands should be considered for ACEC status?
- How should administrative use be managed to protect special area values?
- Are additional administrative designations (e.g., Scenic or Back Country Byways, All American Roads, national recreation trails, watchable wildlife viewing sites) needed to provide recognition, protection, and enjoyment of resources within the NCA?

Public scoping comments were coded into this category if they addressed the creation of specially designated areas (either in support or in opposition to these designations). Because congressional designations can only be made by Congress, these designations cannot be made by the BLM and will not be considered in the NCA RMP. As a result, comments that addressed such designations were not analyzed in this scoping report.

Special Designation Areas	5
Supports SDA designation	5

Comments supported the idea of Special Designation Areas. No specific new ACEC proposals were included in the scoping comments.

Public scoping comments fall within the scope of preliminary issues and concerns.

3.12 WATER and SOIL

The legislation places special emphasis on the NCA's water resources, including seasonal and perennial streams, creeks, springs and seeps, as well as the riparian values associated with the Gunnison River. The eastern portion of the NCA has two major canyon systems, Cottonwood Creek and Escalante Creek. The Wilderness is characterized by two major canyon systems, Little and Big Dominguez Canyons, which drain the Uncompahgre Plateau into the Gunnison River.

Preliminary planning issues include:

- What goals, objectives and management priorities, including desired future conditions and riparian and aquatic restoration priorities, are necessary to ensure that these water resources are of sufficient quality and quantity to support aquatic, riparian, and terrestrial species and communities?
- Which resources are particularly sensitive, and how should management be adjusted in those areas?
- What additional water rights and in-stream flow protections are needed to maintain and enhance the aquatic and riparian resources that were referenced in the legislation?
- What areas of especially fragile soils will need special attention?

Public scoping comments were coded into this category if they addressed water or soil resource management in the NCA.

Water and Soil	5
Increase route maintenance	1
Minimize soil disturbance	1
Protect water resources	3

Comments sought increased water resource protection by minimizing erosion into streams. One proposed solution was increased route maintenance.

All public scoping comments fell within the parameters of preliminary planning.

3.13 PALEONTOLOGY & GEOLOGY

The red-rock canyons and sandstone bluffs in the NCA hold geological and paleontological records spanning 600 million years, providing visitors outstanding opportunities to explore and learn, on both a casual and scientific basis. The NCA made headlines in the Summer of 2010 when a rare dinosaur fossil was found by a local paleontology researcher. As a custodian of these special features, there is also a need to provide protection and conservation for these resources.

Preliminary planning identified the following issues:

- What is the appropriate mix between information/education and protection/preservation for the paleontological resources in this area?

- Are any additional special designations necessary to support and enhance the protection and interpretation of these resources?

Comments were coded if they addressed the management of paleontological or geological resources in the NCA.

Paleontology and Geology	4
Protect/conserv geological and paleontological resources	4

Comments were focused on developing an inventory of resources, protection from theft and vandalism, and determining which sites are most vulnerable.

No new planning issues were identified.

3.14 LIVESTOCK GRAZING

The preliminary plan for D-E NCA noted that the NCA currently contains 16 grazing allotments, which are used by permit holders for cattle and sheep grazing. The Omnibus Act provides for grazing leases and permits to be issued and administered in accordance with existing laws and regulations, and for grazing to continue to occur in the wilderness, subject to reasonable regulations, policies, and practices necessary, and in accordance with section 4(d)(4) of the Wilderness Act and H. Rept. 101-405.

Comments were coded into this category if they addressed livestock grazing on public lands in the NCA. While multiple comments called for public land livestock grazing to cease agency-wide, these comments were not considered planning issue comments because they addressed issues that can only be resolved through national policy.

Livestock Grazing	4
Minimize livestock impacts	3
Supports grazing	1

There was one comment in support of grazing. There were three focused on minimizing the impacts of livestock grazing on the NCA and wilderness.

3.15 ENERGY DEVELOPMENT

The Act withdrew all Federal lands within the NCA and Wilderness from all forms of entry, appropriation, or disposal under the public land laws; location, entry and patent under the mining laws; and operation of the mineral leasing, mineral materials, and geothermal leasing laws. At the time it was designated, there were two valid oil and gas leases within the NCA on the Uncompahgre Field Office side of the planning area and one existing mineral materials site (gravel pit). All three permits have since expired. No additional activity is anticipated under current laws.

Energy Development	4
Concerns regarding energy development impacts	1
Opposes energy development	2
Supports energy development	1

One comment urged the BLM to keep the door open for future power line corridors, while other comments opposed energy development within the NCA and wilderness.

3.16 VISUAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

The BLM is required to inventory and manage for visual resources on BLM lands. Visual resource inventories analyze the scenic value of view sheds using a one to four rating system. Visual resource management categories determine the amount of allowable scenic change allowed in a particular landscape.

Preliminary planning identified the following issues:

- Given the policy to consider designated Wilderness as Visual Resource Management (VRM) Class I, what VRM classes will be necessary outside the wilderness to provide adequate protection for the scenic resources and visual quality of the NCA?
- What management actions, if any, are needed within Dominguez Canyon Wilderness to remedy features that may be inconsistent with VRM Class I designation?

Visual Resource Management	2
Preserve viewsheds	2

Public scoping comments addressed the need to protect the viewshed of the NCA, and overlapped with the preliminary planning issues identified by the BLM

3.17 SOCIO-ECONOMICS

The BLM is required by the Federal Land Policy and Management Act to integrate “physical, biological, economic and other sciences” into its land use planning. Additionally, the National Environmental Policy Act requires federal agencies to “insure the integrated use of the natural and social sciences...in planning and decision making.” To this end, members of the D-E NCA Advisory Council can provide valuable insights as to how the region’s socio-economics can be impacted by BLM management decisions.

Preliminary Planning Issues:

- What do local communities value about the resources in the planning area? What potential BLM land use planning decisions would enhance consistency with the plans, policies, and projects of local governments and communities?
- How can BLM best work with the tourism industry, Colorado State Parks, Visitor and Convention bureaus, local businesses, and others, to ensure visitors are provided with the correct information, and to ensure that sensitive promotion of the area’s resources is accomplished?

Socio-economics	1
Assess socio-economic impacts	1

One comment urged the BLM to thoroughly assess socio-economic impacts.

SECTION FOUR: FUTURE PLANNING

4.1 SUMMARY OF FUTURE STEPS IN PLANNING PROCESS

This scoping report does not make any decisions, nor does it change current management direction set forth in the UFO and GJFO RMPs. Instead, it summarizes those issues identified during the scoping period. The BLM will use planning issues summarized in this scoping report, along with subsequently identified issues, planning criteria, and other information (such as data collected on land health), to help formulate a reasonable range of alternatives during the next phase of the RMP process.

Each identified alternative (including continuation of existing NCA management practices) will represent a complete and reasonable plan for managing the GJFO. Future decisions will occur at two levels: the RMP (or land use plan) level and the implementation level. These decision types are described below. In general, only land use plan-level decisions will be made as part of the RMP process – the noTable Dxception being travel management. The BLM’s evaluation of identified alternatives will be documented in an EIS prepared as part of the RMP process, as required under NEPA.

4.2 LAND USE PLAN-LEVEL DECISIONS

D-E NCA RMP-level decisions will be developed to meet the requirements established by the Omnibus Act. These decisions will identify management direction and guide actions for the coming decades within the planning area. The RMP will provide a comprehensive yet flexible framework for managing the numerous demands on resources located on NCA lands.

The vision for the D-E NCA will be described in the RMP in terms of two categories of RMP-level decisions: 1) desired outcomes; and 2) allowable uses and actions to achieve desired outcomes. Desired outcomes will be expressed in terms of specific goals, standards, and objectives. Goals are broad statements of desired outcomes, such as ensuring sustainable development. Standards are descriptions of conditions or the degree of function required, such as land health standards.

Objectives are specific, quantifiable, and measurable desired conditions for resources. Allowable uses and actions to achieve desired outcomes will be expressed in the RMP as allowable uses, actions needed, and land tenure decisions. Livestock grazing, administrative designations (for example, ACECs), and land disposal are examples of some RMP-level decisions in this category.

4.3 FUTURE IMPLEMENTATION DECISIONS

The RMP will contain broad-scale decisions that guide future land management actions. Subsequent site-specific implementation is often characterized as project level or activity-level decisions. These decisions require a more-detailed, site-specific environmental analysis that is generally conducted after the completion of an RMP/EIS. These decisions generally constitute final approval, allowing actions to proceed (BLM

Land Use Planning Handbook H-1601-1, Section IV[B]). An example of an implementation decision is the development and management of a recreation site.

In some circumstances, like with travel management in the RMP, site-specific implementation decisions may be made through the RMP process.

Where implementation decisions are made as part of the land use planning process, they are still subject to the appeals process or other administrative review as prescribed by specific resource program regulations after the BLM resolves the protests to land use plan decisions and makes a decision to adopt or amend the RMP (High Desert Multiple Use Coalition, Inc. et al. Keith Collins, 142 IBLA 285 [1998]).

The most noteworthy implementation decisions will relate to the designation of roads and trails. The BLM Land Use Planning Handbook directs field offices to complete a defined travel management network (system of areas, roads, and/or trails) during the development of the land use plan, to the extent practical. The Omnibus Act requires completion of a travel management plan as part of the D-E NCA RMP/EIS.

The revised RMP will comprehensively plan for all types of travel (recreational, casual, agricultural, industrial, administrative, etc.) and accompanying modes and conditions of travel, including motorized, mechanized, and non-mechanized (muscle-powered) uses. The Omnibus Act requires that the D-E NCA RMP limit motorized travel to designated routes.

4.4 VALID EXISTING MANAGEMENT

Currently, the BLM-administered public lands in the planning area are managed with direction from the UFO and GJFO RMPs and their subsequent amendments. Preparation of an updated D-E NCA RMP is necessary to respond to changing resource conditions and to respond to new issues and federal policies.

The D-E NCA RMP will establish new land use planning decisions to address issues identified through public scoping and, where appropriate, may incorporate decisions from the earlier UFO and GJFO RMPs. Determining which existing management decisions to carry forward is part of the planning process, and the BLM will review the existing management situation to determine which decisions to carry forward and will identify where new management guidance should be developed. This review will be documented in the Analysis of the Management Situation.

4.5 SPECIAL DESIGNATIONS, INCLUDING NOMINATIONS

The special designations section of the D-E NCA RMP will include a discussion of designated areas such as ACECs, WSRs, and WSAs. It may also include new special management area designations, such as ACECs, river segments eligible and suitable for inclusion in the National WSR System, and newly designated “Wildlands”.

SECTION 5: FILLING DATA GAPS

Prior to its designation as a National Conservation Area, D-E NCA was managed as part of the Uncompahgre and Grand Junction Field Offices. During this time, data was collected by each field office and by the time of designation a large amount of data already existed on both sides of the NCA.

Additional data management and data collection was conducted or is now underway as part of the planning process. A summary is as follows:

- Both field offices completed Wild and Scenic River eligibility reports for segments within the D-E NCA. A summary report for eligible D-E NCA segments was generated for the purpose of reconciling differences between the two field offices' eligibility reports. All three eligibility reports will provide a basis for Wild and Scenic River suitability determinations for D-E NCA segments, which will be included in the RMP/EIS. In addition, all three reports are publicly available and are being used by an independent Wild and Scenic River Gunnison Basin stakeholder group. This group will, in turn, provide suitability recommendations for eligible segments in the D-E NCA.
- Public focus group meetings led by the Mesa State Natural Resource and Land Policy Institute (NRLPI) gave the public opportunities to provide information regarding recreation, wilderness management and the interaction between recreation and other public land uses. NRLPI is currently in the process of drafting a report that describes and analyzes the data collected during these focus group meetings. This data will be used for the RMP/EIS.
- NRLPI also collected survey data from recreationists in the NCA. This data provides additional information regarding recreation from the recreationists themselves.
- Both field offices conducted route inventories on their respective sides of the NCA prior to NCA designation. The data from both route inventories was combined into a single NCA route inventory, and includes trails, ATV trails, primitive roads and gravel roads. This inventory was presented to the public at open houses in Delta and Grand Junction, and the public was invited to comment on individual routes or to describe routes that are missing from this inventory. This data will be used during the travel designation process of the RMP/EIS.
- Both field offices conducted land health assessments on their respective sides of the NCA. Data on the GJFO side was collected in 2007 and 2009, and written into a report in 2010. Data on the UFO side was collected in 2009, and finalized in a report in 2010. A summary report was generated in 2010 in order to reconcile differences between the two field offices' land health assessment reports. All three reports will be used for biological resource planning in the RMP/EIS.
- BLM staff conducted an inventory of potential Lands with Wilderness Characteristics (LWWC) outside the congressionally designated Dominguez Canyon Wilderness. After

an initial mapping exercise, three areas were extensively surveyed for wilderness character. Management of lands that were found to have wilderness character during this inventory will be addressed in the RMP/EIS.

- A Class I inventory for cultural resources in the D-E NCA has not been completed, but will hopefully be underway by the winter of 2011.
- An inventory of the paleontological resources of the D-E NCA is currently underway. This inventory includes a general inventory of the NCA and a more intensive survey of the Dominguez Canyon Wilderness.
- The BLM has begun tribal consultations with the Southern Ute Indian Tribe, the Ute Mountain Ute Indian Tribe and the Ute Indian Tribe (Uintah and Ouray Reservation). These consultations will provide information that will be incorporated into the RMP/EIS.
- BLM staff has also compiled data regarding wilderness characteristics in the Dominguez Canyon Wilderness for use in a wilderness monitoring report entitled Keeping it Wild. This report will establish a monitoring program for documenting trends in wilderness characteristics within the designated wilderness.
- BLM staff has also compiled data on the following resources:
 - Riparian
 - Hydrological
 - Fish and Wildlife
 - Special Status Species
 - Livestock Grazing
 - Noxious Weeds
 - Geological Features
 - Forest Products
 - Land Status
 - Cultural Resources

Data will be used by the BLM for the formulation of resource objectives and management alternatives in the RMP/EIS. Any new data collected while objectives and alternatives are being created will be incorporated as well.

APPENDIX A: NOTICE OF INTENT

The attached pages from the *Federal Register* include the NOI for the D-E NCA RMP/EIS. The NOI was published on August 3, 2010, initiating the scoping process for the project.

[Federal Register: August 3, 2010 (Volume 75, Number 148)]
[Notices]
[Page 45650-45652]
From the Federal Register Online via GPO Access [wais.access.gpo.gov]
[DOCID:fr03au10-90]

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Bureau of Land Management

[LLCON06000 L16100000.DO]

Notice of Intent To Prepare a Resource Management Plan for the
Dominguez-Escalante National Conservation Area and Dominguez Canyon
Wilderness, Colorado and Associated Environmental Impact Statement

AGENCY: Bureau of Land Management, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of Intent.

SUMMARY: In compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), as amended, the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA), as amended, and the Omnibus Public Lands Management Act of 2009 (Omnibus Act), the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Grand Junction and Uncompahgre Field Offices, Grand Junction and Montrose, Colorado intend to prepare a Resource Management Plan (RMP) with an associated Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Dominguez-Escalante National Conservation Area (NCA) and Dominguez Canyon Wilderness. By this notice, the BLM is announcing the beginning of the scoping process to solicit public comments and identify issues.

DATES: This notice initiates the public scoping process for the RMP with associated EIS. Comments on issues and planning criteria may be submitted in writing until September 2, 2010. The date(s) and location(s) of any scoping meetings will be announced at least 15 days in advance through local media, newspapers, and the Colorado BLM Web site at: http://www.blm.gov/co/st/en/nca/denca/denca_rmp.html. In order to be considered in the development of the Draft RMP/EIS, all comments must be received prior to the close of the 30 day scoping period or 30 days after the last public meeting, whichever is later. The BLM will provide additional opportunities for public participation upon publication of the Draft RMP/EIS.

ADDRESSES: You may submit comments on issues and planning criteria related to the Dominguez-Escalante NCA and Dominguez Canyon Wilderness RMP/EIS at any public scoping meeting or by any of the following

methods:

Web site: http://www.blm.gov/co/st/en/nca/denca/denca_rmp.html.

E-mail: dencarmp@blm.gov.

Fax: 970-244-3083.

Mail: Grand Junction Field Office, 2815 H Road, Grand Junction, Colorado 81506.

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Documents pertinent to this proposal may be examined at the Grand Junction Field Office.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: For more information and/or to have you name added to our mailing list, contact Katie A. Stevens, Interim NCA Manager, telephone (970) 244-3049; address 2815 H Road, Grand Junction, Colorado 81506; or by e-mail: Katie A Stevens@blm.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The RMP will replace portions of the existing 1987 Grand Junction Resource Area RMP and the 1989 Uncompahgre Basin RMP. This new planning process will allow the BLM to focus specifically on developing management to conserve, protect and enhance the resources and values of the NCA and the wilderness area as set forth in Section 2402(b) of the Omnibus Act, including the geological, cultural, archaeological, paleontological, natural, scientific, recreational, wilderness, wildlife, riparian, historical, educational, and scenic resources of the public land; and the water resources of area streams, based on seasonally available flows, that are necessary to support aquatic, riparian, and terrestrial species and communities. In developing new management for the NCA and Wilderness Area, the BLM will comply with the direction set forth in the Omnibus Act, which allows certain uses (including grazing, measures to control fire, insects and disease) to continue in accordance with current laws and regulations. The Omnibus Act also withdraws the NCA and the Wilderness Area from certain other uses, including all forms of entry, appropriation, or disposal under the public land laws; location, entry, and patent under the mining laws; and operation of the mineral leasing, mineral materials, and geothermal leasing laws, subject to valid existing rights. Congress' withdrawal of the area to these uses may foreclose certain alternatives. However, the withdrawal in and of itself does not necessarily preclude consideration of these uses in the RMP.

The planning area is located in Mesa, Delta, and Montrose Counties, Colorado and encompasses approximately 209,610 acres of public land. The purpose of the public scoping process is to determine relevant issues that will influence the scope of the environmental analysis, including alternatives, and guide the planning process. Preliminary issues for the planning area have been identified by BLM personnel, Federal, state, and local agencies, and other stakeholders. The issues include:

Is special management needed to restore, maintain, or enhance priority species (including special status species) and their habitats?

How should uses, including recreational, grazing, and motorized and mechanized vehicle use be managed to provide for wildlife (including special status species) habitat needs?

What goals, objectives, and management actions, including

desired future conditions and land restoration actions, are necessary to continue progress toward achieving land health standards?

What goals, objectives and management actions, including desired future conditions and riparian and aquatic restoration actions, are necessary to ensure that these water resources are of sufficient quality and quantity to support aquatic, riparian, and terrestrial species and communities?

How should the Dominguez Canyon Wilderness be managed to protect wilderness values and provide outstanding opportunities for solitude and/or primitive and unconfined recreation?

Is special management still warranted for the relevant and important values recognized in the two existing Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) nominations, and should additional lands be considered for ACEC status?

What stream segments are suitable for designation as Wild, Scenic, or Recreational under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act?

What Visual Resource Management classes will be necessary outside the wilderness to provide adequate protection for the scenic resources and visual quality of the NCA?

How should the cultural resources and archaeological values (prehistoric and historic) of the area be protected and preserved, while still allowing for appropriate information/education efforts?

What recreational experiences and outcomes should be used to focus future recreation management in the NCA?

Preliminary planning criteria include:

Completing the RMP in compliance with FLPMA, NEPA, the Omnibus Act, and all other applicable laws, rules, regulations, policies, and guidelines (including environmental laws and Executive Orders listed as supplemental authorities in Appendix 1 of the NEPA Handbook H-1790-1);

Ensuring that proposed management within the wilderness is consistent with the Wilderness Act of 1964 and develop a Wilderness Management Plan during the RMP process;

Initiating broad-based public participation as an integral part of the planning and EIS development process;

Working with the Dominguez-Escalante National Conservation Area Advisory Council consistent with their established charter;

Inviting cooperating agency and local government input;

Consulting with Native American Tribes and other governments at required intervals;

Developing adaptive management criteria and protocols and also clearly identify the criteria that would trigger re-evaluation of management;

Developing a comprehensive travel management plan during the RMP process to identify all travel needs for the public, as well as administrative and resource management activities such as research and monitoring, permitting, or emergency or fire access;

Designating all public lands within the planning area as open, limited, or closed to off-road vehicle use, mechanized use, and/or non-motorized use;

Incorporating Standards for Public Land Health and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management into the planning process; and

Responding to the Omnibus Act by developing management to ``conserve and protect for the benefit and enjoyment of present and future generations [those resources and values identified as purposes

in the legislation, including the] geological, cultural, archeological, paleontological, natural, scientific, recreational, wilderness, wildlife, riparian, historical, educational, and scenic resources of the public land; and the water resources of area streams, based on seasonally available flows, that are necessary to support aquatic, riparian, and terrestrial species and communities.''

Before including your address, phone number, e-mail address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment--including your personal identifying information--may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

The minutes and list of attendees for each scoping meeting will be available to the public and open for 30 days after the meeting to any participant who wishes to clarify the views he or she expressed.

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The BLM will evaluate identified issues to be addressed in the plan, and will place them into one of three categories:

1. Issues to be resolved in the plan;
2. Issues to be resolved through policy or administrative action;

or

3. Issues beyond the scope of this plan. A public comment that suggests developing management for one of the resource uses from which the area was withdrawn by the legislation would likely fall within this category.

The BLM will provide an explanation in the Draft RMP/EIS as to why an issue was placed in category two or three. The public is also encouraged to help identify any management questions and concerns that should be addressed in the plan. The BLM will work collaboratively with interested parties to identify the management decisions that are best suited to local, regional, and national needs and concerns.

The BLM will use an interdisciplinary approach to develop the plan in order to consider the variety of resource issues and concerns identified. Specialists with expertise in the following disciplines will be involved in the planning process: rangeland management, minerals and geology, forestry, outdoor recreation, wilderness, archaeology, paleontology, wildlife and fisheries, lands and realty, hydrology, soils, sociology and economics.

Authority: 40 CFR 1501.7, 43 CFR 1610.

Lynn E. Rust,

Acting State Director.

[FR Doc. 2010-19060 Filed 8-2-10; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310-JB-P

APPENDIX B: BLM COMMENT FORM

The BLM comment form that follows was distributed at the public scoping open houses August 30 and 31, 2010.



**Bureau of Land Management
Dominguez-Escalante NCA
Grand Junction and Uncompahgre Field Offices**



This comment period is associated with the initial public scoping for this project. The BLM defines scoping as a collaborative public involvement process to identify planning issues to be addressed as the plan is developed. Scoping is the first formal public input opportunity associated with this planning process.

We encourage you to provide your scoping comments by filling out and submitting this comment form **by *October 1, 2010***. Please mail your completed form to the address on the opposite side or fax to 970-244-3083. You are also welcome to submit your comments by email to dencamp@blm.gov.

Before including your address, phone number, e-mail address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment--including your personal identifying information--may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

Your Name _____ Date _____

Mailing Address _____ City/State/Zip _____

Telephone (optional) _____ E-Mail Address (optional) _____

Would you like to be added to this project's mailing list to receive future project-related information?

email materials only ☐ email and hard-copy materials ☐ No ☐

Please indicate your affiliation by checking **one** of the following boxes:

- | | | |
|---|---|-------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual (no affiliation)
Group | <input type="checkbox"/> Private Organization | <input type="checkbox"/> Citizen's |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Federal, State, or Local Government | <input type="checkbox"/> Elected Representative | <input type="checkbox"/> Regulatory |

Agency

Name of organization, government, group, or agency (if applicable) _____

Would you like to be contacted for: ☐ Travel Management Meetings ☐ Recreation

Planning Meetings

The BLM wants to hear from you! The following questions have been provided to help guide you in providing comments that are within the scope of this project. Other comments are welcome.

- 1) We have identified known potential issues and criteria to guide the planning process based on lands and resources in the planning area. Please provide comments on these issues and criteria, and/or identify other issues or criteria that you think should be considered (If your comment pertains to a specific issue or criteria, please use the reference code, e.g. "PC1")
- 2) What areas within the Dominguez-Escalante National Conservation Area or Dominguez Canyon Wilderness do you value? Why?
- 3) Please provide any additional comments that you have regarding this project.

_____ (Please fold this sheet in half & tape shut before mailing – Do not staple)

**Dominguez-Escalante
RMP
c/o Grand Junction Field
Office
2815 H Road
Grand Junction, CO 81506**

APPENDIX C: LIST OF COMMENTORS

The formal scoping process began on August 3, 2010, with the publication of the NOI in the *Federal Register* (**Appendix A**). The scoping period continued until October 1, 2010. **Table C-1** lists the commentors who sent written submissions to the BLM for the D-E NCA RMP/EIS as part of the public scoping process.

Comments Received during the D-E NCA Scoping Period			
Name	Affiliation Category	Affiliation	Number of Planning Issue Comments Received
Burch, Jan	Individual	None	1
Burch, Janice E.	Individual	None	4
Cox, Kris	Individual	None	2
Cruz, Caroline	Individual	None	1
Day, Bill	Individual	None	7
Fulton, Betty	Individual	None	3
Gore, Jo	Individual	None	1
Graziano, Jim	Individual	None	1
Herrman, Chris	Individual	None	1
Heuscher, Penny	Individual	None	4
Hiatt, Nina	Individual	None	1
Hockin, Kathy C.	Individual	None	1
Kelly, Corinne	Individual	None	4
Kimber, Terry	Individual	None	3
Korte, Mary	Individual	None	4
Montoya, Marilyn	Individual	None	1
Olsen, Joyce	Individual	None	2
Pacal, Joe	Individual	None	1
Potter, John	Individual	None	1
Priest, Pat	Individual	None	1
Rechel, Eric	Individual	None	2
Riddell, Jim	Individual	None	10
Sales, Richard and Diane	Individual	None	1
Schenk, Sherry	Individual	None	7
Shepherd, Janice	Individual	None	2
Solomon, James B.	Individual	None	8

Comments Received during the D-E NCA Scoping Period			
Stone, FD	Individual	None	1
Strouchanan, Paula	Individual	None	1
Tucker, Mary	Individual	None	5
Wilhelm, Sylvia	Individual	None	1
Wilkes, Jeff and Teri	Individual	None	3
Woodward, Paul	Individual	None	1
Form Letter	Form Letter	None	4
Martin, Steve	Business/Commercial Sector	Motorcycle Accessories Unltd., Inc	1
Blackburn, Walt	Organization (non-profit, citizen's group)	Thunder Mountain Wheelers ATV Club	7
Chapel, Steve	Organization (non-profit, citizen's group)	Western Slope ATV Association	14
Dicamillo, Gail	Organization (non-profit, citizen's group)	Gold Prospectors Association of America	6
Environmental Coalition B	Organization (non-profit, citizen's group)	Environmental Coalition	38
Fancher, Jeremy J.	Organization (non-profit, citizen's group)	International Mountain Bicycling Assn	1
Gelatt, Lee	Organization (non-profit, citizen's group)	Colorado Environmental Coalition, Western Colorado Congress	4
Gilliam, Charles	Organization (non-profit, citizen's group)	Western Slope ATV Association	2
Hockin, Kathy C.	Organization (non-profit, citizen's group)	Back Country Horsemen	1
Johnson, Kenneth	Organization (non-profit, citizen's group)	Western Slope ATV Association	1

Comments Received during the D-E NCA Scoping Period			
Malapanes, James	Organization (non-profit, citizen's group)	Western Slope ATV Association	3
Malapanes, Jim and Kate	Organization	Western Slope ATV Association	5
Muhr, Chris	Organization (non-profit, citizen's group)	COPMOBA	3
Olsen, Joyce	Organization (non-profit, citizen's group)	Great Old Broads for Wilderness	2
Pease, Billy L.	Organization (non-profit, citizen's group)	Gold Prospectors Association of America	1
Plsek, Gary	Organization (non-profit, citizen's group)	Western Colorado Trials Assn	12
Rohde, Tracy	Organization (non-profit, citizen's group)	Western Slope ATV Association	4
Shepherd, Janice	Organization (non-profit, citizen's group)	Great Old Broads for Wilderness	13
Solomon, James B.	Organization (non-profit, citizen's group)	COHVCO, Trails Preservation Alliance	2
Sundstrom, Linea	Organization (non-profit, citizen's group)	American Rock Art Research Association	1
Tucker, Conrad	Organization (non-profit, citizen's group)	Western Slope ATV Association	4
Zeunen, Flint	Organization (non-profit, citizen's group)	Western Slope ATV Association	3
Svoboda, Larry	Public Agency	Environmental Protection Agency	8
van West, Rein	Public Agency	Ridgway-Ouray Community Council	2
Weber, Steven W.	Public Agency	Department of Energy, Western Area Power Administration	1

D-E NCA Comments Received during the Grand Junction Field Office Public Scoping Comment Period			
Name	Affiliation Category	Affiliation	Number of Planning Issue Comments Received
Alderson, George and Francis	Individual	None	1
Lambeth, Ron	Individual	None	1
Liewer, Jim	Individual	None	1
Rohde, Tracy	Individual	None	2
Form Letter	Form Letter	None	1
Riggle, Dan	Organization (non-profit, citizen's group)	COHVCO, Trails Preservation Alliance	2
Environmental Coalition	Organization (non-profit, citizen's group)	Environmental Coalition	2

D-E NCA Comments Received during the Uncompahgre Field Office Public Scoping Comment Period			
Name	Affiliation Category	Affiliation	Number of Planning Issue Comments Received
Abbott, Dave	Individual	None	2
Greenbank, George	Individual	None	1
McCracken, Nicholas	Individual	None	1
Form Letter	Form Letter	None	4
Form Letter	Form Letter	None	1
Budd-Falen, Karen	Business/Commercial Sector	Budd-Falen Law Offices, LLC	2
Davis, Kent	Business/Commercial Sector	Escalante Ranch	1

D-E NCA Comments Received during the Uncompahgre Field Office Public Scoping Comment Period			
Stimpert, Marc	Business/Commercial Sector	Brown, Schottelkotte, Stimpert & Vaughn, LLC (Escalante Ranch)	9
Tischbein, Heather	Organization (non-profit, citizen's group)	Western Colorado Congress	1
Gimbel, Jennifer	Public Agency	Colorado Water Conservation Board	1
Kuhn, R. Eric	Public Agency	Colorado River District	1
Lyon, Peggy	Public Agency	Colorado Natural Heritage Program	1

APPENDIX D: SCOPING COMMENTS BY PLANNING ISSUE

The BLM received 264 ‘planning issue’ comments during the D-E NCA scoping period. These comments were classified by RMP planning category and by planning issue. A selection of representative comments for each planning issue category, and for the general RMP process category, is included in this appendix. Comments reflecting the same concern or recommendation are represented by a single comment. In addition, some of the comments have been abbreviated from their original text, while other have been presented verbatim to preserve the intended message. Comment letters can be viewed in their entirety at the GJFO in Grand Junction, Colorado.

In the scoping comments form was the following notice regarding privacy: *“Before including your address, phone number, e-mail address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment--including your personal identifying information--may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.”*

BLM has separated the list of commentors from the comments themselves, but that information is available at the Grand Junction Field Office.

Comments are included for the following planning issues:

Table	Topic
Table D-1	Air, Climate and Noise
Table D-2	Cultural Resources
Table D-3	Energy Development
Table D-4	Fish & Wildlife
Table D-5	General Planning
Table D-6	Law Enforcement
Table D-7	Paleontology & Geology
Table D-8	Recreation
Table D-9	Recreation/Travel Management
Table D-10	Socio-Economics
Table D-11	Special Designation Areas
Table D-12	Travel Management
Table D-13	Vegetation Management
Table D-14	Visual Resource Management
Table D-15	Water & Soil
Table D-16	Wild & Scenic Rivers
Table D-17	Wilderness

Table D-1: Air, Climate and Noise

We encourage BLM to utilize the SPreAD-GIS model to analyze and preserve the natural soundscape of the NCA, especially in the Wilderness and other areas managed for quiet use recreation.

BLM must take a hard look at climate change impacts from management decisions in the environmental impact statement for the resource management plan. BLM should first assess and, wherever possible, quantify or estimate GHG emissions by type and source by analyzing the direct operational impacts of their proposed actions. Off-road vehicle designations may significantly increase or reduced greenhouse gas emissions contributing to climate change and must be analyzed under NEPA.

This analysis should in turn lead to the development of thoughtful management prescriptions and alternatives in the land use plan that will address how BLM will mitigate these causes and adapt its management over the coming years to prevent permanent impairment and unnecessary or undue degradation to the resources in the face of climate change.

The BLM should evaluate the planning area for key vulnerabilities according to the criteria above, and the nature of the climate threat to selected ecosystem elements should be fully examined and presented as part of the planning process in order to comply with its legal obligations under NEPA and other relevant laws and regulations. Such an assessment should include careful consideration of species and habitats of conservation concern.

We strongly recommend that the agency use the following "risk management" strategy in conjunction with the "risk assessment" strategy laid out above when developing management prescriptions in the face of climate change.

Studies have shown that reducing traffic speed can greatly reduce the amount of dust. Dust control is especially important given that the wind here can carry that dust up onto higher snow covered areas such as the Grand Mesa. Dust covered snow melts much faster than white snow, leading to an earlier spring runoff.

We recommend the travel management plan describe measures to mitigate dust associated with both "on road" and "offroad" vehicle traffic throughout the planning area. The BLM should consider developing a framework in the RMP that outlines when dust mitigation might be needed (i.e. during drier months with less precipitation) and describe plans through which such mitigation will be implemented.

Table D-2: Cultural Resources

Please recognize, account for and seek to protect the archaeological sites, the petroglyphs. For example barriers could be built in front of the petroglyphs to prevent further damage.

Please post reminder signs at each commonly-visited petroglyph panel reminding people that the oils from their skin can accelerate deterioration of the ancient artwork. "Panels are very sensitive to contact with human skin. Please look with your eyes only," might be more effective than "Do not touch ."

Inventory and protect existing cultural and archeological sites. The damage that was done about a year ago to the petro glyphs should be prevented by a monitoring system) signage that explains care of the sites and anything else that can be done!

BLM should consult with the Native American community to determine whether there are sites or specific areas of particular concern, including sites of traditional religious and cultural significance.

RMP provisions regarding the Old Spanish National Historic Trail should be coordinated with, and complementary to, actions taken or anticipated for other federal-land portions of the trail and for private-land portions of the trail. This consideration should include interpretative information, visitor access and services, and ensuring the protection of sensitive artifacts and sensitive natural lands in the vicinity and historic landscapes associated with the trail.

BLM's goal should be to protect, conserve, and where appropriate restore archeological and historical sites and landscapes. BLM should outline specific management actions, such as stabilization, fencing, signing, closures, or interpretative development, to protect, conserve, and where appropriate restore cultural resources. BLM should adopt measures to protect cultural resources from artifact collectors, looters, thieves, and vandals.

BLM should survey all known or discoverable cultural and historic sites, or those adjacent sites may be adversely affected.

BLM should determine the sites or areas that are most vulnerable to current and future impact and adopt management actions necessary to protect, conserve, and restore cultural resources.

BLM should complete a Cultural Resource Management Plan that coordinates with the objectives of the RMP and seeks to provide for an appropriate proactive process of inventorying for cultural resources, making determinations of eligibility for the National Register, and seeking to nominate eligible properties to the National Register.

I've been told by a local archeologist that there are quite a few Native American Indian tool making spots within the area known as the Hunting Grounds. If any of them are near dirt roads then the roads should be diverted away from them to keep their locations safer and less likely to be vandalized. Grazing should not be allowed near these sites either. The resource plan should include preparing a photographic inventory of the current condition of these and other historic sites within the NCA, so that their status overtime can be monitored.

Consult with a professional rock art site management expert as part of the planning effort.

Table D-3: Energy Development

Regardless of whether or not energy development is a use that is included in the RMP, we recommend the withdrawal of mineral rights be noted in the RMP and that the RMP also include a full inventory of: 1) any current leases within the NCA; 2) land potentially available for future leases and 3) the reasonably foreseeable development for each parcel already leased, or parcels that could potentially be leased.

It is our understanding that energy development is not a likely land use within the NCA, but we request notification if this is not correct or if the situation changes, EPA has concerns regarding potential air quality and water quality impacts related to energy development and would make additional recommendations or suggestions, including air quality monitoring and modeling expectations, if this becomes an expected use within the NCA.

Western is concerned that energy development, including the citing and placement of a utility corridor, not be excluded from the subject lands. In addition, access to construct, operate, maintain, and reconstruct as needed, those facilities located or that could be located within the NCA should be recognized as part of any decision related to energy development.

Energy development should not be sited in the following areas in the Grand Junction planning area: Wilderness Areas; Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs); National Monuments; National Conservation Areas; National Historic and National Scenic Trails; Other lands within BLM's National Landscape Conservation System (NLCS), such as Outstanding Natural Areas and Cooperative Management Areas, or areas that have been proposed for designation by pending legislation; ACECs; Threatened, endangered and sensitive species habitat; Other critical cores and linkages for wildlife habitat, such as that identified by state wildlife agencies through State Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategies; Citizen Proposed Wilderness Areas, as set out in Congresswoman DeGette's Colorado Wilderness Act, currently pending in Congress; and Other lands with wilderness characteristics as identified by the land management agencies or the public, including in the pending Colorado Wilderness Act.

Table D-4: Fish and Wildlife

Restore Big/Little Dominguez watershed to Colorado River Cutthroat Trout habitat

I am concerned about the impact of humans and their dogs on the wildlife. Signs and information regarding this may already be there but if not please post reminders to keep dogs on leashes and state why.

Research best methods to manage the wildlife and streams in this area.

I want all decisions made about this NCA to consider their impact on wildlife first.

OHV use has little to no effect on wildlife in the Cactus Park area.

Table D-4: Fish and Wildlife (cont)

The RMP should adopt planning and decision-making processes (including data collection, analysis, and monitoring) that employ measurable planning objectives at multiple biological scales (i.e. fish and wildlife populations, habitat and ecosystem conditions) to ensure viable wildlife populations.

To appropriately designate and protect wildlife corridors within the DominguezEscalante NCA, BLM should:

- collaborate with other state and federal agencies and non-governmental groups to obtain current data regarding crucial wildlife habitat and corridors;
- connect already designated wilderness areas and other reserves to ensure that wildlife populations have the ability to easily move between large areas of protected crucial habitat;
- identify species that will act as focal species for identifying important wildlife corridors and will also act as indicators for how well the wildlife corridors are working;
- use the best available science to decide upon the exact areas to be designated and protected;
- ensure that all designations include specific provisions regarding management so that designated wildlife corridors are protected and can function as designed; and
- constantly monitor the effectiveness of designated wildlife corridors and implement adaptive ecosystem management strategies.

Improve and protect Cutthroat Trout populations

Extra care is needed to maintain the health and welfare of bighorn sheep. When hikers and their dogs stress the desert big horn sheep they often take refuge on the higher sections of the surrounding cliffs. So it is important to let them have this safe refuge by limiting the human presence in those areas . Rock climbing, for example, should be restricted from areas where the sheep are known to seek refuge. Travel near the rim should be limited to just a few view points and the Cactus Park access trail. The rim view points should be limited to foot traffic.

The speed limit on dirt roads within the NCA should be set at at most 20 mph. If they are county dirt roads then the BLM should negotiate with the county to achieve this same speed limit. This will have the added benefit of reducing the number of wild animals and birds killed by vehicles as well as the number of domestic livestock killed or stressed by vehicles.

Table D-5: General Planning

Love Mesa, Sawmill Mesa, Dry Mesa, Escalante and Wagon Park should continue to be managed for multiple use.

Please inventory and generate and follow a protection plan for all NCA lands.

Please give the maximum possible protection to the Dominguez-Escalante lands.

I would like to see the Dominguez-Escalante NCA (outside of the Wilderness Area) left as it is now. It seems like that would be 'wise usage'.

Table D-5: General Planning (cont)

TMW major concern during the planning process is to remind the planning team to not stray from the traditional multiple use concepts of public land management in Zone 5. Recent history has show the acceleration toward the more restrictive environmental concept that sometimes is factually questioned by science or past history or experience. TMW encourages the BLM to be cognizant of such concerns in the Dominguez-Escalante NCA use plan .

The BLM should limit use of adaptive management to appropriate situations (where the risk of failure will not cause harm to sensitive resources). An adaptive management program should comply with the guidelines set out above and the RMP must fully explain, with sufficient detail, how BLM will employ adaptive management, what the "triggers" are for its use, what opportunities the public will have to participate in adaptive management decisions, and how the agency will fund the program.

The BLM should make every attempt to seek public input and encourage the public to participate in the RMP, including holding workshops, making a preliminary range of alternatives available for public comment prior to issuing the draft planning documents, providing interim information regarding inventories of routes and visual resources, posting GIS files, and posting analyses such as ACEC evaluations and analysis of comments submitted on the draft to the planning website. The BLM should also identify cooperating agencies on the planning website.

BLM must complete an inventory of values for which the NCA was designated and specifically describe how each of these values are being protected in the RMP. All of the management alternatives must conserve NCA resources first, and then make other management decisions that do not interfere with their protection and conservation. Thus, in order to comply with these requirements, the range of alternatives cannot include management decisions that will undermine protection of NCA resources and purposes in favor of other resources or uses, or that will harm these values.

Certain portions of the NCA should be designated for specific (not multiple) uses.

We recommend the RMP identify the current site-specific conditions of all resources, including vegetation, soils, cultural, historical, wildlife, riparian areas, wetlands and seeps, and aquatic habitat using the best available information. Those conditions can be compared to long range management desired conditions, standards and guidelines, and reference conditions to better determine the actions or management strategies needed to meet the desired conditions.

Please write me down as a strong supporter of keeping this area as wild as possible as we see continued growth and more visitation to this area.

Table D-5: Law Enforcement

Ban glass containers from the Hunting Grounds.

I hope you ban glass bottles in this area-broken glass is dangerous as well as unsightly in the landscape

I would like to see the use of glass containers prohibited if possible. often walk my dogs in the Little Park area, find it wonderful in many ways and yet hate to see the many broken bits of glass that are left from people using the area long ago.

Motorized recreation, because of the ability to cover a large amount of terrain, allows for a type of policing the back country.

Law enforcement needs to work with local clubs to help curtail illegal activities.

Areas should be marked as private or public

User groups could and would help to clean-up NCA (old Whitewater dump, trash) and maintain trails, roads and area. User groups could also help police the area.

Routes within the NCA are there for people to reach their destinations while enjoying the beauty of the surrounding area. They should not be treated as speedways.

The BLM should consider banning glass beverage bottles from the NCA.

Table D-6: Livestock Grazing

The one concern that I have is that my ranch borders this area and our BLM grazing permit is entirely within the proposed protected area. As good stewards of the land, we want to continue to use our grazing permit while at the same time protecting these unique lands.

I request that management plans be put in place to minimize the resource damaged caused by livestock grazing. Such best practices might include, for instance, grazing low-altitude grasses in the fall rather than spring, thereby leaving more plant energy in the root systems over the winter to be ready for the next growing season.

I request that there be plans implemented to mitigate livestock/recreational user interactions. Signage and educational programs and materials could help all users know how best to handle these interactions.

EPA recommends BLM evaluate the available rangeland within the NCA and its characteristics in conjunction with current grazing allotments to determine if changes to the current scheme are warranted and/or achievable. The BLM should analyze whether livestock grazing should continue in a particular area and if so, how to best utilize adaptive management strategies to maintain or achieve desired conditions.

Table D-7: Paleontology and Geology

BLM's goal should be to protect and conserve special geologic formations and paleontologic resources .

BLM should determine the geologic and paleontologic sites or areas that are most vulnerable to current and future impact and adopt management actions necessary to protect, conserve, and restore these resources.

BLM should prohibit the collection of any specimens. BLM should adopt measures to protect paleontologic resources from looters, thieves, and vandals.

BLM should define the level of inventory needed to provide a basis for understanding the distribution, comparative importance, and potential uses of paleontologic resources (i.e., relative sensitivity, relative opportunities for interpretive development, relative scientific importance, relative potential for research and education).

Table D-8: Recreation

Need more areas for folks seeking an area to find birds, where their calls aren't drowned out by motorized vehicles. Please consider those of us who appreciate quiet, dust-free, noise-free areas with a view.

Would really like to see access open up for a mountain bike trail system along the east rim above the Gunnison River

Although I drive to different areas of the NCA, I would prefer minimal motorized access, and more protection of resources (especially in the Cactus Park area) from motorized travel.

Keep trailheads, parking and other developments to a minimum.

Do not allow paintball use in the Hunting Grounds.

Limit camping to designated spots in the Hunting Grounds.

Create areas/zones for quiet hikers. Motorized vehicles startle me and they startle the birds.

The trail up Little Dominguez Canyon, where it passes the inholding where someone lives (Billie Rambo? Rambeau?), could use clarification. I'm sure part of the problem is that hikers don't want to get their feet wet when the creek is running high , so establishing a clear creek crossing to be used in all weather and water levels would help. It also wouldn't hurt to have more signs explaining the continued occupation of a private residence within a Wilderness, especially since I have reports that the resident is very much in favor of the Wilderness designation.

I would also like to see paintball use prohibited.

Please create more quiet walking recreation opportunities in the DENCA outside of the wilderness area.

Table D-8: Recreation (cont)
Recreation experiences and outcomes should include: _Feeling of freedom to enjoy the open terrain. _Ability to practice riding skills on my motorcycle. i.e. Motorcycle Trials area. _Ability to explore trails, roads, and canyons. _Social experience with friends who enjoy the same form of recreation. _Economic benefits to local business
The Hunting Grounds, 9-mile cut off and Cactus Park should be considered for SRMA designation.
Motorized recreation provides a substantial economic benefit to the Grand Junction area. Not only through the purchase of equipment and accessories but many additional businesses benefit in an indirect way.
The community of Grand Junction benefits from motorized recreation in many indirect ways because recreation provides a release of tension caused by everyday life experiences. Riding my motorcycle on a trail causes me to have a smile on my face and I pass that on to every person that I encounter. It provides a chain reaction of positive feelings.
Motorcycle trail riding is very similar to any other form of recreation or relaxation that allows a person to enjoy, participate, experience challenges, and improve skills. It makes me a better person as I interact in society. I feel more alive.
I think it is time for the managing agency to step forward and do more positive things for the motorized recreation community. I feel that the motorized user groups have been discriminated against as far as access to recreation areas.
Current regulated activities seem to be compatible with my recreational enjoyment.
Manage the NCA for recreationists who enjoy quiet recreation, instead of for motorized recreationists. Make the motorized recreationists go somewhere else.
Do not limit shooting or camping activities on BLM land
Place emphasis on Cactus Park as an ATV use area.
Group use should not be altered from normal BLM policy or become more restrictive.
There should not be night restrictions on use of this area. The WSATVA has a history of holding night rides in this area.
Shooting should not be allowed in the staging area but should be allowed in other areas of zone 3.
Dispersed camping should not be restricted excessively as was done at Rabbit Valley. Camp fires should not be restricted excessively as was done in Rabbit Valley.

Table D-8: Recreation (cont)

Recreational gold panning in Rattlesnake Gulch/Gunnisson River provides the following community benefits: Provides recreational opportunity for families and people of all ages and people with physical disabilities.

*Because of the low altitude, people with cardiovascular issues have less problems.

* Great physical activity * Close proximity to Delta would benefit local businesses.

*By having a place to go with clear guidelines and rules, it provides an educational opportunity for environmentally sensitive recreational mining.

*Opportunity for historical enlightenment about the importance of mining and farming in the local area.

We assume that there will be controls on the depth of gold bearing gravel extraction and also the area where mining is allowed . Whenever an area is mined -the process of digging, classifying, and extracting concentrates followed by refilling the holes actually loosens up the soil and would allow native plants a more beneficial area to grow in. Recreational prospecting doesn't use any chemicals, it is simply water or air, gravity, and hard work.

We are asking to utilize the bench gravel deposit from the water line of the Gunnison river up to the railroad right of way. BLM personnel would stake or fence off the boundaries where prospecting is allowed. This area could also be expanded to include some of the small benches upstream to the Alkali Creek drainage. When you compare the size of the area that we would like to use for recreational mining to the overall size of the NCA, it is a very tiny sliver of land.

We would like to see the casual use of the river which at this time is panning and non-powered sluicing of material from within the waterway continued. If possible we would like to have the river in this section opened up for dredging.

For the gravel bench deposit where most of the gold bearing gravel is located there are many possible methods for extracting gold bearing concentrates, which ultimately do not impact the area in a negative way

The next step up in control would be some sort of permit. People without permits could still go in but at least the enforcement officer could check miners and possibly catch some of the problem miners.

IMBA strongly encourages the development of a mountain bike accessible trail system within the D-E NCA and managing that area under a Special Recreation Management Area designation. The Cactus Park, Gibbler Mountain and Gunnison Bluffs areas offer excellent settings for a mountain biking SRMA. Additionally, the Sawmill Mesa/Dry Fork area would also provide terrific opportunities in the southeast area of the D-ENCA. In developing a new trail system IMBA encourages the use of stacked loops that provide a range of experiences for all user levels. Including the development of expert only trails designed for the truly advanced riders who enjoy the extra challenge of technical trails or long distance rides .

Need good boater access at Bridgeport and Whitewater

Keep visitor services buildings to a minimum, minimize human intrusions

Keep dispersed camping

Need to keep the Cactus Park area open for both day and night recreation.

Table D-8: Recreation (cont)
Keep dispersed camping
ATVs bring more money into the area than bicycles. The Cactus Park area needs to be managed for motorized users.
It is our feeling that we are not being unreasonable asking for a prospecting area in the NCA. The rafters , fishermen, and hunters have the use of many miles of river. The hunters , hikers, and ORVs have the use of hundreds of thousands if not millions of acres of ground. In comparison, the gravel bar area is less than 10 acres of ground. Admittedly prospecting impacts the ground to a certain depth which can be limited by rules and regulations. However, since there are no chemicals used, the possible impact on the river is negligible, and the ground will recover quickly. If we are able to get this area designated for prospecting, our club officers would be more than happy to help craft a set of rules to control access and methods of mining for the area if you would like our input.
Area has potential for events, such as ATV campaigns, jamborees, etc.
An area is needed for OHV usage for future increase in recreation and to prevent over-usage in other areas.
Areas should be designated for usage. Some areas should be set aside for OHV designation, and should be maintained and monitored.
Please do not restrict access to Zone 2 for responsible use.
All group travel should be limited to something reasonable such as 14 heart-beats. The plan should consider whether the Wilderness portion should have an even smaller group size limit.
Paint balls don't belong in such a special area. Paint ball fighting not only spreads paint, and leaves behind unsightly unused paint balls but more of concern is that paint ball fights also lead to a trampling of vegetation as the participants spread out in a confined area to hide from and chase each other.
The resource plan should include an inventory of existing vehicle accessible dispersed camping spots especially those spots that include a campfire ring. The plan should include analysis of those sites to determine which if any should be closed because they are problematic -such as ones that are too close to water, too close to historic or geological features (such as an overhang), too close to combustible materials (moving the fire ring may be a sufficient fix) or too close to other dispersed camping spots. The BLM may have other criteria for rating a dispersed camping spot as problematic. For those dispersed camping spots the plan deems viable, the plan should also have a schedule for adding signage to each of these sites. Vehicle accessible dispersed camping can then be limited to officially designated spots and thus allow the BLM to supervise and control the creation of new sites.
Target shooting if allowed at all within the NCA should be confined to one or two specially selected spots with sufficient backstops.
I think it is time for the managing agency to step forward and do more positive things for the motorized recreation community. I feel that the motorized user groups have been discriminated against as far as access to recreation areas. What I mean is the NEPA process tends to work against all users except hiking and horseback riding.
Please do not limit shooting and campfire/camping activities in areas controlled by BLM.

Table D-8: Recreation (cont)
Place emphasis on Cactus Park as an ATV use area.
BLM should address the issue of increased traffic, tourism and access to the Dominguez Canyons Wilderness so as not to impact the Escalante Ranch private lands.
Need better management of recreation on Escalante Creek. Recreationists on Escalante Creek frequently disregard private land, cut fences and destroy/trash pristine areas along the creek.

Table D-9: Recreation/Travel Management
I believe the area will sustain numerous single track trails. The emphasis of off highway, motorized recreation needs to be encouraged. It is one of the best things that can be done with this area to encourage an economic increase for the area.
Keep multiple use areas need to have mountain bike options open to them. Would prefer designated areas for a trail system to be built, not only connecting point A to point B, but with loop system access. Of course, as with most Mtn. Bike trails in the areas they would be open to hiking, running and horseback riding
The new bathroom and parking facilities in Cactus Park are a nice addition, however many people do not want to bring their fancy toy haulers and vehicles up the road right off the highway 141 (entrance to the park) it is a horrible road and we don't understand why that is not being fixed. If you want people to enjoy this area it needs to be accessible to everyone not just four wheel drive vehicles.
I strongly recommend trails that are maintained and people encouraged to use these trails, and respect the wildlife and delicate environment. But it is not right to keep people off the lands, they are public lands and should not be preserved only for the tough and wild.
My family and I enjoy riding dirtbikes and ATV's here in Western Colorado and would very much like to see the DENCA include those modes of recreation as areas of consideration. Specifically, it would be really cool to see a connection from the Cactus Park area to the Uncompahgre NF.
The trail from Cactus Park down into Big Dominguez is currently difficult to reach and in places difficult to follow. The road now devolves into deep gullies that are nearly impassible when wet, even with 4-wheel drive, and vulnerable to erosion wet or dry. The road should be closed and a new trailhead established before the road crosses the gullies. Then where the trail drops down off the rim, and begins its steep descent, it is hard to find from above. A little trailwork simply marking the trail at the point where it crosses the rim more effectively is all that's needed.
Don't establish a trail to the top of the waterfall on Big Dominguez unless the damage from dispersed use becomes more destructive than having a trail. Right now, there is no need I see for such a trail.
There is a growing need for more motorized trails to accommodate the growth of this form of recreation. Perhaps make this area an SRMA. Loop trails offer the greatest opportunity for fulfillment of the riding experience. Leave as many roads and trails open as possible. If there is a cultural need to close a trail or road, then there should be a plan to supplement what is being taken away.

Table D-9: Recreation/Travel Management (cont)

We feel that the Domiguez Escalante area can provide the same great trials bike opportunities, and would like to see that implemented in the management plan.
I would like to voice my opinion on keeping sigle tracks open and expanding openings. My self and my 3 sons, 2 of which served our Country all enjoy the riding of our dirt bikes in Colorado and surrounding states. I would really love to see more property opened up for our sport.
ATV trails need to be established prior to any other routes as this is an ATV emphasis area. The ATV community has been steered to this area and there are currently very few ATV trails on local BLM lands. Zone 3 is used by many, many families, especially families associated with-- OHV use. This area needs to be managed as a motorized recreation area because that is what it is.
Let's spend more time and effort on education and less time trying to keep people off of these lands.
As the region's population grows, additional trail resources will be needed to accommodate that growth. Providing mountain bike trails within DENCA will allow for a planned, well-thought out blueprint to deal with that growth.
The Cactus Park, Gibbler Mountain and Gunnison Bluffs areas have a lot of potential for singletrack trail development. The Sawmill Mesa/Dry Fork area in the southeast region also has significant potential for singletrack development.
Non-motorized trail development in DENCA should offer a variety of trail experiences for runner, hiker, biker and equestrian alike. The bulk of trails should be in the advanced beginner to intermediate skill level, but trails that appeal to hard-core technical riders such as the so-called "freeride" trails or challenging equestrian specific trails should also be considered. Although we are primarily interested in developing shared use non-motorized trails, we do support some shared used motorized singletrack development. The concept of shared use for all users of singletrack sounds good in theory, but in reality many non-motorized trail users will avoid motorized trails if they see heavy use by motorcycles, or equestrians will avoid trails heavily used by mountain bikers. Careful planning must be done to minimize user conflicts.
Post signs that state speed limits and pack it in-pack it out in the Hunting Grounds.
Maps with trails and roads should be available to public.
Create trails and recreation opportunities near communities
Connect trails using loops to prevent conflicts
Add more ATV trails, and don't close them in Zone 3. Zone 3 is used by many OHV enthusiasts.
Do not restrict motorized access in zones 1, 3 or 5.
Create trails in areas 3 and 5. Zone 3 is a very enjoyable OHV recreating area.
There are more OHV enthusiasts than ever, but our public lands get reduced all the time. Closing or restricting access pushes people to other areas, which leads to a more negative impact in those areas.

Table D-9: Recreation/Travel Management (cont)

Within the Gunnisson Bluffs zone I own 40 acres of property, which is bordered on 3 sides by BLM. I also have a home on my property and reside there. Whether or not the NCA designation happens, (I am also interested in where that process is), I do not support any road closures to motorized use in section 1. However, I am more concerned this may occur if the NCA designation is made. One of the contributing factors to buying this property, in 2000, was having the ability to leave my "yard" on my ATV (or truck) and explore and enjoy the public lands around me. Just a couple miles from my property, there are beautiful overlooks of the Gunnison River and great scenery across the canyon. This is an enjoyable little ride to take visiting family and friends to show them what beauty lies in my backyard. There are several roads that access to the overlook, off Bean Ranch Road. Several routes make loops that make an enjoyable ride. I am a responsible user and support staying on the trail. I do not support cross-country travel in this area, even though it is not signed as "limited use".

Cactus Park/ Dominguez Canyon WSA: Cactus Park is adjacent to the Bangs Canyon SRMA, the Dominguez WSA and the Uncompaghre NF. The existing system of travel routes serves the ATV and 4X4 communities well. The Tabaguache Trail also goes through the area. Dispersed camping and wood gathering has left a poor imprint on the vegetation and routes. Designation of the existing through routes and the establishment of a developed campground will go a long way to reduce the impacts and retain the recreation opportunities. In addition, a developed campground will help accommodate the foreseeable increase in visitors as the Bangs Canyon and Tabaguache Trail improvements come on line.

Table D-10: Socio-economics

BLM should analyze the socioeconomic impacts of the proposed management alternatives in accordance with the approach set out in "Socio-Economic Framework for Public Land Management Planning : Indicators for the West's Economy," including the more specific considerations detailed above. The values of protected lands and the costs associated with motorized recreation should be incorporated into economic analysis.

Table D-11: Special Designation Areas

WSAs, ACECs and Wild and Scenic River designations and recommendations should be based upon actual science and knowledge of the area as they relate to the enabling legislation's mandate to protect and conserve the resources. The BLM shouldn't minimize protection of the area due to votes or consensus at meetings.

I want you to put some sort of land protection on that piece of land between the two creeks that is now not part of a Wilderness proposal. This way it can be added later when the BLM sees the logic of making even this area Wilderness.

We ask the Planning Team to be cautious of being unduly influenced from the anti-motorized community in Protecting Significant Values.

Table D-11: Special Designation Areas (cont)

There is no per se bar to managing and protecting the many values of these lands through overlapping designations, such as ACECs and Wild and Scenic River Segments. Because different designations serve different purposes, and management is often limited to protect only those values relevant to those particular designations, the fact that an ACEC may lie within a Wild and Scenic River corridor or WSA does not justify failing to designate the ACEC.

We encourage the BLM to use designation of special recreation management areas and areas of critical environmental concern to protect natural values and, at this point, have identified six areas that we propose for special management as part of an overall management approach to creating, enhancing, and protecting quiet recreation experiences, protecting critical species habitats, and providing needed expansions of protections around current WSAs, ACECs, and SRMAs. Many of the values in these areas are already described in detail in the CWP submission and will be discussed in the context of these additional proposals in our subsequent submissions. In summary, the six proposed areas and designations are: 4) ACEC incorporating an area that borders Bangs Canyon and Dominguez North CWPs, which would protect important cultural resources (Northern Ute heritage sites) and also provide quiet recreation opportunities.

Table D-12: Travel Management

Limit off-road vehicle use in the NCA to designated routes, as required by Congress, and limit those routes to the essential minimum. Inventory and protect all the cultural, archaeological, natural, scientific, recreational, wilderness, and wildlife values that Congress listed as important resources within the NCA.

Many places cause a split in the trail and therefore extra erosion and damage.

Official routes need signs and motorized vehicles should be limited to designated routes. Some of the surfaces need repair or to be rerouted.

Driving in a creek bed is a no no for obvious reasons.

Special management needed for priority species and habitat, include strict travel management in areas that may have Gunnison Sage-grouse now or in the future (shown as vacant/unknown in GUSG Range Wide Plan, p.86) , occupied white-tailed prairie dog towns (considering all prairie dog related species), and desert bighorn habitat.

Continue trail building efforts because this helps to designate the proper and less damaging route of travel.

Regarding parking: Please encourage people to car pool to the area.

KEEP OFF ROAD VEHICLES OUT as much as possible. Quiet recreation must become a priority as humans encroach on these limited wilderness areas

Table D-12: Travel Management (cont)

Roads on the Plateau have been there for nearly 100 years. These roads were first used to explore for minerals then agricultural use and now recreation. These roads in no way affect the quality of the area and actually allow hunters and others a great place to visit and enjoy this wonderful place even if they are not able to hike in due to age or disability. Most of these roads are "cliffed out" in that road creep, which is a concern of the BLM, and that just cannot happen.

Another tool that should be considered is creating a new designation for some of the roads that are of concern for the BLM. This designation should be "Downed Game Retrieval Only". This can be designated for certain dates per year that coincide with the DOW's hunting seasons.

Mark roads in the Hunting Grounds for vehicles and repair areas where there are multiple routes or where vehicles have gone off road to create new tracks.

Limit motorized vehicles to designated routes.

Effective signage, brochures, trained volunteers, and other educational programs, in "real people" language (as opposed to "bureaucratspeak") could help make all users happier with management plans. Something as simple as changing signs that say, "Closed to Motorized and Mechanized Use" to add, "Except for authorized permittees and agency staff" could make a difference.

My request is that all but a few of the most heavily-used and least impacting roads in the Dominguez North area above the bluff be closed to motorized and mechanized travel, and that no road continue all the way to the bluff or rim cliffs.

It is my observation that one motorized vehicle has more impact per mile on all of the above than twenty-five horses, or fifty to one hundred foot travelers or non-motorized boaters. And motorized travelers usually cover more miles, as well. Therefore, insuring that adequate opportunities exist for all users, means that some will be restricted more than others.

Limit off road vehicle use in the NCA to designated areas marked with signs of explanation about routes and use of the roads. Keep routes to a minimum and reroute existing roads that have been expanded to two lane where there was road damage or inconsiderate use of the land. In some areas there appear to be many roads to particular destinations and such areas should be reduced to one route.

The NCA needs more non-motorized routes outside of the wilderness. Designate routes that lead to serene views as non-motorized. This will offset the overuse of the wilderness by giving quiet users other options.

Keep the Dad's Flat Road open connecting Cactus Park to the Gunnison River

Keep ATV trails open, make loops where possible, make new ATV trails. Instead of closing roads -make them ATV trails

We are especially interested in a single track trail connecting Glade Park to Nine Mile canyon. This area is very unique and colorful.

Table D-12: Travel Management (cont)

TMW strongly suggests that during the planning process the planning team have a high priority on establishing a true and accurate inventory of existing trails, roads, and pathways.
Present day there is little to no signage of routes in Zone 5, making it very confusing for the traveling public.
TMW ATV club fully supports the concept of the transformation from "ride anywhere" to "designate trails".
We ask that the planning team take special note of areas that are open to motorized use, but are only accessible thru private property. This has the potential to establish user-created routes starting from existing routes and sometimes causes unnecessary resource damage. This traditionally occurs during the fall hunting season periods by out-of-state hunters that do not know the area and fail to familiarize themselves with needed information. Pre-planning with signage and multiple sources of education is paramount in the success of the plan.
Highlighted routes are routes used often by WSATVA and other ATVs (see map for details). Cultural sites can easily be avoided by the 50 ft policy
The dead-end routes in what is known as Dominguez North needs to be connected to create loops. BLM is in possession of maps showing proposed new loops in this area. Several dead-end routes go to the bluffs overlooking the river. Please connect them rather than close them. There is plenty of room in the Dominguez North area to bypass cultural sites with connecting routes. Connect other dead-end routes in Cactus Park with ATV connectors too, for loops rather than closing routes. BLM is in possession of maps showing proposed routes.
The Dad's Flats road must stay open to the public.
Closing unnecessary routes will cause more people to congregate in smaller areas which will result in resource damage that can be avoided.
Search & Rescue activities will be enhanced by connecting dead end routes with ATV trails. There is a history of searches in this area and there have been past times when the searchers have been forced to create routes to help individuals
BLM should identify both existing restrictions on motorized access and other areas that can be damaged by motorized use on all maps used in travel planning. User-created routes should be distinguished from legitimate roads on travel planning maps, and, where they were created illegally, should be excluded from the baseline inventory.
BIM must design a travel plan that minimizes conflicts among users and damage to natural resources. Motorized routes should be evaluated to ensure that they are located and bounded to meet the minimization criteria for purposes of BLM management and enforcement.
BLM should use the information provided in Appendix I (Habitat Fragmentation from Roads: Travel Planning Methods to Safeguard BLM Lands) to measure habitat fragmentation, conduct a thorough fragmentation analysis, and inform decisions regarding road closure and other limitations on use in the RMP.
BLM should follow the eight travel planning principles detailed above to ensure that only routes which truly serve a valid purpose for the public remain open.

Table D-12: Travel Management (cont)

BLM should limit motorized and mechanized travel within the NCA to provide a high level of protection to the resources which the NCA was designated to protect. The travel plan must comply with the enabling legislation, limiting motorized use to designated roads.

The eroding and unsustainable route that currently serves as northern boundary for Dominguez Canyon Wilderness should be carefully evaluated and considered for closure and landscape restoration. Meanwhile, this route, which provides access to private land at the Gunnison River, should be immediately closed to general public use. Similarly unsustainable and unauthorized routes parallel to this route should be closed to all motorized and mechanized use, with appropriate landscape restoration promptly undertaken.

BLM should designate the management zones according to the following categories to help guide the comprehensive travel and transportation management process, as well as other management decisions and prescriptions in the RMP: Passage zone, Motorized backcountry zone, Primitive zone, Pristine zone. BLM should release preliminary maps of management zones for public comment prior to issuing the draft RMP.

The attached maps have GPS routes shown in red that I have GPS'ed at different times. Please note that I have used these routes at different times. All these routes are jeep accessible; many are used by 2 wheel drive pickups.

As the motorized roads, double track and single track trails are closed, much less area is left for folks to use. Any Wilderness and Wilderness Study Area restricts firefighting, timber cutting (to help control pine and pinion beetle and controlling ground cover which will stop the massive fuel for fires) and weed control. Colorado is having large fires now because of these large amounts of fuel.

Leave as is but add more ATV trails that dead end into loops

Keep Dad's Flats road open 24 hours

It seems to me that the trails used by ATV and other motorized vehicles should be maintained pro gov and extended to make more loops. Dead-end routes should remain as these dead-ends go somewhere or they would not be there in the first place.

Need more ATV trails, and make loops out of some of the dead-ends. Even if the dead-ends cannot be made into loops, they need to stay open because they often go to scenic spots. Trails must be built sustainably.

Dad's flats road is a a great route and needs to stay open.

The hunting grounds lends itself to a variety of uses. All users should be required to stay on existing roads.

Should document areas with special values where use should be limited or re-routed to maintain these values.

Spanish Trail and Riverfront Trail should be developed. Private land must be identified and marked along these trails.

Need trails and roads for fire control, search and rescue, and range management.

Keep the Dad's Flat Road open for ATVs, connecting Cactus Park to the Gunnison River.

Table D-12: Travel Management (cont)

The resource plan should also include an analysis of the existing routes to locate splits in the routes that serve no useful purpose (by these I mean where the secondary route quickly comes to a dead end or soon rejoins the main route). Splits that serve no useful purpose should be closed and revegetated. The plan should include a schedule for such work.

The resource plan should establish the rule that motorized and mountain bike travel should be limited to designated routes. Most horse travel should also be limited to designated routes but an exception is clearly needed for ranchers actively working with domestic livestock. Groups of 4 or more people traveling by foot should also be limited to designated routes (otherwise their off-route travel can create new routes just by their volume of wear.) The plan should include a schedule to close inappropriate routes -such as ones that travel within seasonal creek beds.

I would suggest leaving as many roads and trails open as possible in the area of the Hunting Ground, 9-Mile Cut-off and Cactus Park. By inadvertently closing routes you squeeze down the already diminishing recreation/exploring opportunities for the motorized user group.

Keeping ATV trails open and adding more ATV trails is of supreme importance. Instead of 'closing' roads, turn them into ATV trails. Connect 'dead end' trails with ATV routes to make them 'loops'. Make new ATV trails wherever and whenever possible.

Please keep the 'Dad's Flats Road' open that connects Cactus Park to the Gunnison River.

Don't close trails and roads to the motorized community.

EPA recommends BLM give preference to travel routes that do not have wetlands, stream crossings, sensitive soils, critical habitat or meadows.

The BLM should use density of roads, expressed as "miles of road per square mile" (rd mi/mi²) as a measure of land health. It's one measure of level of development. It's a measure that is useful in comparing one unit with another (the draft NCA Plan does that, comparing its units with the Colorado National Monument, see chapter 4 pages 15 to 17). It is an objective, quantified measure, one that makes sense to people who don't even have the facts on the significance of roads. All roads are, of course, not equal in their impacts upon the land and surrounding habitats. However, to remain useful, this level of detail is not necessary.

More trails should be created to compensate for the additional users. The number of trails that have already been closed or that will become closed does not help disperse recreation for those additional users which will make a negative impact on the existing trails. I am excited that there will be a motorized trail created (in the process already?) that will connect Cactus Park & Bangs Canyon. This also will make a convenient to access Bangs Canyon from the South, Instead of the North, for those like myself who live in Whitewater.

Off-road vehicle use: Require all vehicles to stay on designated roads and trails, and close excess roads and trails in the Escalante-Dominguez NCA.

Table D-13: Vegetation Management

Other habitat management should include restoring chained or otherwise changed habitat on mesa tops to the original PJ or sage habitat, and weed control in these areas, and in sage and riparian areas. Restoration priorities should aim to recreate pre-settlement habitat types.

Riparian conditions should have as natural stream flow regime as is possible. It is critical for riparian wildlife to have native riparian vegetation, including cottonwoods, willows and a good shrub understory below cottonwoods. Tamarisks, especially, should be removed wherever possible.

If forest products or other uses don't further the mandated purpose of the NCA, they can't be done.

I would like to recommend that this area (Brushy Ridge, above the Escalante forks area) stay open for firewood cutting for private use. There is quite a bit of dead-standing and dead-down pion juniper which makes very good, clean burning fuel source. Its gathering, while not significant at all, in the scale of the surrounding forest, might help in reducing wildfire risk. Vehicle access is difficult and will never be heavy traffic impact for this type of use for that simple fact. The area is beautiful space to spend a weekend providing fuel wood for our family. It is a long-term family experience in which we have had three generations of our family involvement in this activity. It is both recreational as well as functional use of this area .

TMW encourages the BLM to actively address the managing and taking of fire wood fuels. This area has provided such for years and is a viable concern in the management process. Protecting the Values should be aggressively pursued with allowance of prescribed burnings and mechanical fuel reduction that will directly affect the current fuel conditions and future fire behavior.

Firewood cutting and Christmas tree cutting should be allowed to continue in the Cactus Park Area.

Cactus Park/ Dominguez Canyon WSA: We would like to see greater restrictions on residential wood gathering and Christmas tree harvesting on the sparse, desert pinion forests. The removal of these very, very old pinion pines should be more closely monitored, and both of these activities encourage cross country travel by large vehicles during times when the soils are wet. We hope that these activities will be better managed in the future.

Table D-14: Visual Resource Management

Grand views of the Grand Valley must be preserved without trails/roads. Rims provide wonderful views to the Gunnison.

BLM must complete an inventory for visual resources on all lands within the planning area. We urge BLM to prioritize completion of this inventory, as well as to keep the public apprised of the values identified.

Table D-15: Water and Soil

Biological soil crust should not be disturbed anywhere. Soils with too much selenium shouldn't be either. Actually, its hard to see why much soil should be disturbed anywhere to fulfill the enabling legislation's stated goals.

The BLM should promptly seek water rights for the reliable and effective protection of those important water sources, supplemental to the wilderness streams themselves.

Not only should the resource plan include an inventory of existing routes of travel, but it should also include analysis of those routes for areas where the routes are damaged by wear or erosion. The plan should include a schedule for dealing with each problem area.

The RMP should describe how the BLM will ensure compliance with Executive Order 11990, "Protection of Wetlands," including how wetlands will be identified, avoided, or ultimately mitigated if necessary. The RMP should include a summary of the acreage and condition of all wetlands and riparian sites within the NCA to outline baseline conditions to be monitored throughout the life of the RMP.

We also recommend the RMP include water quality data for the streams, lakes and watersheds of the NCA to provide a baseline for future monitoring. The RMP should include a summary of the best available monitoring data in the project area such as water quality characteristics relative to any applicable ambient water quality standards, stream bank conditions, and vegetative cover.

Table D-16: Wild and Scenic Rivers

Study streams for wild and Scenic Rivers Act suitability and establish strong management provisions for stream flow and stream corridors.

You should also study streams for inclusion in the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act if they have suitability. Strong management should be established for stream flow and stream corridors .

The BLM should ensure that comprehensive and diverse public comments on these decisions regarding management and suitability are collected and carefully considered. Such comments should not be limited to those received from independent commenting groups ("stakeholder processes"), but should be recruited and welcomed from a broad array of commenters.

Protect WSR values

Challenges the eligibility of the following river segments: Dry Fork Escalante Creek Segment 2, Escalante Creek Segments 1 and 2, and Gunnison River Segment 3.

Opposes additional protections using WSR within the NCA and Wilderness because they are already protected.

Table D-16: Wild and Scenic Rivers (cont)

As specifically noted herein, due to private land and water ownership and use, and various man-made physical structures, the following segments are not eligible for Wild and Scenic River status: Dry Fork Escalante Creek, Segment 2; Escalante Creek, Segments 1 and 2; Gunnison River, Segment 3

Dry Fork Escalante Creek, Segment 2_The BLM classifies this 2.89 mile stream segment as eligible, with a preliminary "recreational" classification. Report at 26. Of the 2.89 stream miles, an uninterrupted 0.46 mile stretch lies solely on land owned by Mr. Miller. The Report correctly notes that the stream channel is bisected by an unimproved road and by several fences to delineate livestock grazing. The Report incorrectly states that there are no water diversions within this segment. The Report fails to mention that there are also several culverts and pipes which convey water across the creek, the presence of hay fields on private land, and the presence of annual livestock grazing. The Report also fails to mention that the stream is highly intermittent, flowing for, on average, only one to two weeks per year. The Report lists the outstandingly remarkable value ("ORV") of this segment at "vegetation," noting that the area contains Fremont cottonwood/skunkbrush sumac riparian vegetation. Vegetation, in and of itself, does not qualify as an ORV. This segment should be removed from the eligibility report.

Escalante Creek, Segment 1_The BLM classifies this 8.45 mile stream segment as eligible, with a preliminary "scenic" classification. Of the 8.45 stream miles, 2.69 miles lie solely on private land, much of which is owned by Mr. Miller. The Report correctly notes that water diversions are present in the segment, but fails to mention that 1) grazing occurs along this segment; 2) there are multiple water diversions present; 3) that the public does not have access to the private property sections which are adjacent to the creek; 4) that private property is fenced out from public land with barbed wire fences, which intersect with the creek. The Report also fails to mention that in most years, the majority of the water which flows down the creek is fully appropriated by Mr. Miller for diversion and irrigation use, and is often heavily supplemented with appropriated water from the Beaver Dam Reservoir located upstream of the creek. In addition, there is a cabin and corrals located directly adjacent to the segment, located on private land at Escalante Forks.

To qualify as a WSR, this segment must be "free flowing," meaning "flowing in a natural condition without . . . diversion." 16 U.S.C. §§ 1273(b) & 1286(b). While the presence of "low dams, diversion works, and other minor structures" does not necessarily preclude "free flowing" status, the actual "diversion" of water does. In this case, the majority if not entire Flow of the creek is, in fact, privately owned and diverted for irrigation use. As such, Escalante Creek Segment 1 does not qualify as "free flowing" and is therefore not eligible for WSR status. Moreover, to be eligible as a "scenic" WSR, this river segment must be "free of impoundments, with shorelines or watersheds still largely primitive and shorelines largely undeveloped" 16 U.S.C. § 1273(b)(2). Considering the numerous agricultural improvements and uses on the creek, this segment is not eligible as a "scenic" river segment.

Table D-16: Wild and Scenic Rivers (cont)

Escalante Creek, Segment 2_The BLM classifies this 8.48 mile stream segment as eligible, with a preliminary "recreational" classification. Report at 32-33. Of the 8.48 stream miles, 5.07 miles lie solely on private land, much of which is owned by Mr. Miller, and 2.51 miles lie on State controlled land, much of which is leased for grazing use by Mr. Miller. There are several water diversions and dams along this segment, and water is appropriated and diverted by Mr. Miller for irrigation use. At least a dozen fences cross the creek within this section. Man-made brush berms are located adjacent to the creek to control erosion. The creek has been channelized in several places. Livestock grazing occurs along the creek, and livestock drink directly from the creek. There is no public recreational access. The road often parallels or crosses the creek. The county built a staging area for road building. Irrigation ditches parallel the creek in places. Grain bins and corrals are found adjacent to the creek. Rip rap is found on the bank in various locations. A number of power lines cross the creek. Irrigation use in the summer utilizes all or nearly all flows, minimizing habitat for fish, desert bighorn sheep and other wildlife. There are a total of five farmsteads directly adjacent to the creek. In addition to the foregoing, Mr. Miller believes that the BLM is mistaken in reporting that monkey flowers and hookless cactus currently exist in this stream segment. For the reasons noted above, including the numerous water diversions, agricultural improvements and uses, and nearly exclusive private and State control of these lands, this stream segment is not eligible for WSR status.

Escalante Creek, Segment 2_ BLM guidance precludes the BLM from designating stream segments which are predominately non-federal in ownership: In cases where a particular river segment is predominately non-federal in ownership, and contains interspersed BLM-administered lands, BLM shall evaluate only its segment as to eligibility and defer to the State or to the private landowners' discretion as to their determination of eligibility. BLM Manual 835I -Wild and Scenic Rivers at § 0.06(B). In the case of this particular segment, nearly 90% of the creek is in State and private ownership. In such circumstances, the BLM cannot designate a stream segment as eligible without the landowner's permission. Mr. Miller, in his discretion, deems this stream segment to be ineligible for designation as a WSR.

Gunnison River, Segment 3_The BLM classifies this 17.48 mile stream segment as eligible, with a preliminary "recreational" classification. Report at 37-38. Of the 17.48 stream miles, the BLM claims that only 2.59 miles lie on private land, most of which is owned by Mr. Miller, and 0.87 miles lie on State controlled land. The BLM's river segment ownership is inaccurate, in that the majority of what the BLM claims to "own," and therefore control, is only owned and controlled on one side of the river, with ownership and control on the opposite bank being private. The BLM only acknowledged private ownership when both banks of the river were private land. A total of ten private residences lie adjacent to the river. A privately owned abandoned gravel quarry lies adjacent to the river. Moreover, the BLM failed to recognize that the railroad corridor is private property. Given these facts, the majority of the segment, from the County line to its confluence with Escalante creek, is partially or wholly privately owned and controlled. As noted above, in such circumstances, the BLM cannot designate a stream segment as eligible without the landowner's permission. Mr. Miller, in his discretion, deems this stream segment to be ineligible for designation as a WSR. BLM Manual 835I -Wild and Scenic Rivers at § 0.06(B).

Table D-16: Wild and Scenic Rivers (cont)

Gunnison River, Segment 3_ The river segment does not qualify as "free flowing," given the many diversions of water (a total offour pumping plants located on private land along this segment) divert water from the river, and the presence of rip-rap on the banks in various locations. J 6 U.s.C. § 1286(b) (precluding from the definition of "free-flowing" any river section subject to "diversion" or which includes "rip-rap"). The segment is also subject to livestock grazing, a lack of public access, includes a low water dam, includes an orchard, and includes a railroad adjacent to the entire river segment. Given the diversions of water, rip-rap, many agricultural improvements and uses, and predominate private access and of these lands, then this segment does not qualify for WSR status.

Given the nature of the above noted stream segments, they should not be listed as eligible for WSR designation. Disqualifying characteristics may include: 1) "vegetation," in and of itself, does not qualify as an ORV; 2) lands which are predominately owned and controlled by private parties are generally not eligible or suitable for designation; 3) river segments which are subject to "diversion," or which include "rip-rapping" are not eligible for designation; and 4) lands which include numerous agricultural improvements and uses may not qualify for "scenic" or even "recreational" status. Each of the above noted stream segments include one or more of these disqualifying characteristics. At a minimum, the private lands located within the above noted stream segments should not be designated as eligible for WSR status.

Cottonwood Creek: This stream is an important feature associated with adjacent lands with wilderness character and included in citizen wilderness proposal lands. Those wilderness values should be considered as part of this stream's wild and scenic evaluation.

Escalante Creek, segments 1 and 2: This stream boasts unique eligible features and it contributes to geographically significant segments and public lands adjacent and downstream.

Gunnison River, segments 2 and 3: This regionally significant river warrants careful review and enduring protection as an important recreational opportunity and as the hydrologic heart of unique adjacent public lands.

Remove Escalante Creek Segment 1 from Wild and Scenic eligibility status, particularly because of problems associated with recreation usage on the river and abutting private land.

Rubideux Creek needs federal protection to prevent the State of NCA Colorado Prison Camp from totally taking and interesting area fully of pre-historic indian sites, wildlife, and scenic values. The same goes for Escalante Creek. A plan could help preserve the ranching way of life.

I strongly oppose any wild and scenic river along the Escalante Creek and the Gunnison River.

Any wild and scenic analysis for NCA streams, whether conducted through the NCA plan or the UFO plan, should not assume that the streams are sufficiently protected by the NCA or (within the NCA) wilderness designations.

Table D-16: Wild and Scenic Rivers (cont)

The CWCB appreciates the Draft Report's commitment to collaborating with non-federal stakeholders during the suitability phase of Wild and Scenic River analysis for the Uncompahgre Planning Area and portions of the Dominguez-Escalante National Conservation Area. The CWCB looks forward to a similar collaboration during the suitability phase of the Wild and Scenic River investigation for the Uncompahgre and Dominguez-Escalante Planning Area to further evaluate the eligibility classifications of the inventoried river segments and identify whether and to what extent there are plausible alternatives to designation of eligible segments as suitable.

Many of the segments identified as eligible may be appropriate for alternative management plans in lieu of designation or determination of suitability. We believe this is particularly true of all segments which lie within the Dominguez-Escalante NCA. For these reasons the following segments should be managed outside of WSRA and thereby be removed from the eligibility list and not be considered for suitability: Big and Little Dominguez Creeks, Dry Fork Escalante Creek, Segment 2, Cottonwood Creek, Escalante Creek, Segment 1 & 2. Other segments should be removed from suitability consideration for being too short or for being adjacent too or predominantly on private land: Gunnison River.

Table D-17: Wilderness

Conduct a wilderness inventory and protection plan for all NCA lands, including Dominguez North Citizens' Wilderness Proposal and the roadless lands southwest of the current wilderness on the benches above Escalante Creek.

Keep the Dominguez Canyon Wilderness area as wild as possible and re-wild other areas where needed. Keep parking facilities, roads, trailheads, and trail networks to the absolute minimum necessary to protect the Wilderness.

I sincerely hope that you will conduct wilderness inventory and make protection plans for all NCA lands. This should specifically include the Dominguez North Citizen's Wilderness Proposal and those roadless areas southwest of the current Wilderness on the benches above Escalante Creek.

Please keep the Dominguez Wilderness area as wild as possible, and take steps to re-wild other areas. Please keep parking areas, roads, trailheads, facilities, and trail networks to the absolute minimum needed to protect the Wilderness area.

Please keep the Dominguez Canyon Wilderness area as wild as possible and re-wild other areas where needed. Also, please keep parking facilities, roads, trailheads, and trail networks to the absolute minimum necessary to protect the Wilderness.

I also feel that areas that are not "wilderness" even though they might be included inside the boundaries, should be looked at differently.

I hope you will work to keep the Dominguez Canyon Wilderness area wild and untrammeled.

Table D-17: Wilderness (cont)

The area between the Gunnison River and the Tabeguache Trail , north of the Dad's Flat road at the north-western boundary of the Dominguez Canyon Wilderness deserves special consideration. I urge the BLM to give the area below the cliffs or bluff its most stringent restrictions to keep it wild and isolated. Foot or horse travel, dispersed back-country camping, hunting and fishing should be the only recreational uses allowed. No trails should disrupt the sense that a person might be the first one ever to discover this place (even though there are occasional signs of human use going back at least 6,000 years). Keeping this area wild effectively expands the viewscape of the Dominguez Wilderness. The area above (upstream of) the rim or bluff, at first glance, is rather unremarkable, although I have found that the wildflowers are particularly interesting, varied, and lovely compared with other more heavily-used areas. I further request that this upstream area be set aside as a buffer for the area below the bluffs.

I think it is important to create a wilderness inventory and protection plan for the entire NCA.

I would like to see the Dominguez Canyon Wilderness kept as wild as possible. Keeping parking areas, trailheads, etc. to a minimum and setting strict guidelines for activities within the wilderness should help to preserve the wilderness qualities.

Please keep the Dominguez Canyons Wilderness as wild as possible. I believe there is far more land available to those who want to bicycle, motor bike, ATV, snowmobile or any other wheeled/motorized form of transportation than there is land kept quiet and wild.

BLM must inventory for wilderness character and consider protecting wilderness characteristics in the RMP. The BLM should recognize the range of values associated with lands with wilderness characteristics. The BLM must consider a range of alternatives for managing lands to protect their wilderness characteristics.

BLM should consider designating new Wilderness Study Areas, including the areas identified with this submission.

The Utah Settlement does not affect BLM's obligation to value wilderness character or, according to BLM directives, the agency's ability to protect that character, including in the development of management alternatives.

To ensure that wilderness values receive proper and sufficient attention as a critical aspect of land management in preparation of the Dominguez-Escalante NCA RMP, BLM must address wilderness as a separate and unique issue in the planning process including in its Planning Criteria, in the Analysis of the Management Situation and in each section of the RMP.

The following areas have been identified as citizen-proposed wilderness and should be protected: Dominguez North, Roadless lands adjacent to Dominguez Canyons Wilderness. Management prescriptions for these areas should include closed to motorized vehicles, VRM Class I and other protective measures.

The Wilderness Management Plan must protect and restore the wilderness character of the Dominguez Canyon Wilderness Area, and BLM must manage all activities within the wilderness with the strictest interpretation of the Wilderness Act.

I would also like to see a wilderness inventory and protection plan for all NCA lands in this area including the Dominguez North Citizens' Wilderness Proposal so as to keep this area in play

Table D-17: Wilderness (cont)

With the current increased usage of this resource area the BLM must ensure that particular areas continue to be protected for their pristine wilderness characteristics. These areas include: Dominguez Canyons, Little Book Cliffs, Demaree Canyon, The Palisade, Sewemup Mesa, Bangs Canyon, Granite Creek, Hunter Canyon, Kings Canyon, Maverick Canyon, Sagebrush Pillows, and UnawEEP Canyon.

BLM should expand the wilderness recommendations for the five WSAs as proposed by citizen groups, including Dominguez Canyons, Little Book Cliffs, Demaree Canyon, The Palisade, and Sewemup Mesa. BLM should review the wilderness characteristics of the citizen-proposed units and designate new WSAs or "wilderness characteristics areas" with protection for their wilderness values under the Interim Management Policy. The EIS should include a map showing these areas, as was done in several Utah RMPs (such as Vernal, Moab, and Monticello). This will help the public consider alternatives at the draft EIS stage.

The wilderness character of such places as Dominguez Canyon, Sewemup Mesa, The Palisade, Demaree Canyon, and Bangs Canyon should be protected.

The NCA plan must fully evaluate potential wilderness lands within the NCA.

With the current increased usage of this resource area the BLM must also ensure that particular areas continue to be protected for their pristine wilderness characteristics. These areas include: Dominguez Canyons, Little Book Cliffs, Demaree Canyon, The Gateway Palisade, Sewemup Mesa, Bangs Canyon, Granite Creek, Hunter Canyon, Kings Canyon, Maverick Canyon, Sagebrush Pillows, and UnawEEP Canyon.